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# **Managing the Blues**

*Theories and Practices of Power in the Police Service*

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## **Declaration**

The research presented in this thesis is wholly my own work. The research has not been published elsewhere, nor has it been used in a prior thesis or submitted for a degree at another university.

## Summary

The primary intention of this thesis is to explore theories and practices of power. To that end, the analysis first pays close and critical attention to a number of theories of power, and employs the empirical example of the police organization as a means through which to explore the strengths and weaknesses of these different theoretical perspectives.

These themes are examined in a number of ways: firstly, by setting out and exploring different sociological and organizational theories of power; secondly, by considering a range of power-related practices (management practices, hierarchical practices, and gender related power practices) in light of theoretical approaches to power; and thirdly, by seeking to push forward theories of power in light of the (theoretically informed) empirical analysis. The empirical analysis is based on semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation of officers in one Constabulary. This thesis brings to the police literature a critical perspective on organizations that has been largely lacking to date. The analysis aims to extend the terms of debate about the theory and practice of power in some measure in light of its focus on how power operates in cultural practices, organizational practices, and notions of subjectivity and identity management.

This thesis draws first on the power-related work of Max Weber, and associated critiques, for a greater understanding of the assumptions and limitations of bureaucracy, appropriate to a study of power in the quasi-militaristic bureaucratic police organization. The thesis also draws on the power-related approach of Michel Foucault, and related critiques. The analysis engages critically with the power/knowledge concept, and related questions of resistance and agency.

Considerations of epistemological and ontological constraints inform the whole analysis, with regard to theories of power, methodology, and in explorations of power-related theory in light of empirical data. This thesis argues that power informs what is often described as the intransigence of police culture, and that power is reflected in, and as a consequence of, organizational structures, managerial practices, and officers' concerns with subjectivity.

Accordingly, the underlying assumptions of this thesis are that:

- 1) in order to understand many seemingly intransigent practices within the police force it is necessary to explore the analytical significance of power as expressed in structure, discourse and practices, and;
- 2) that identities are negotiated in a complex environment in which success and status are informed and defined largely by a history of white, male practices.

The research places questions of power inequalities at the centre of much of the analysis, in particular gender inequalities. The analysis also engages with current debates in organizational theory about power and resistance and seeks to extend the ways in which resistance is theorized and researched empirically. The analysis therefore considers officers' 'interactions with, and responses to' a range of organizational practices, in order to engage critically with the power-related implications of everyday practices in the police, and, to push forward the ways in which workplace resistance (and compliance) are theorized.

This thesis shows some of the ways in which assessment practices in the police organization exacerbate and shape concerns with subjectivity as often expressed in attempts to protect aspects of identity, or in the privileging of some aspects of identity in this very public, and male dominated, workplace. A central contention of the present work: that many theories of power, including those associated with Weber and Foucault, do not adequately incorporate the influence and role of identity and subjectivity in the shaping of power practices.

## **Abbreviations**

Male Chief Constable (CC)

Male Deputy Chief Constable (DCC)

Male Assistant Chief Constable (ACC)

Male Superintendent (M Supt.)

Female Chief Inspector (WCI)

Female Inspector (WI)

Female Sergeant (WS)

Female Police Constable (WPC)

Male Chief Inspector (MCI)

Male Inspector (MI)

Male Sergeant (MS)

Male Police Constable (MPC)

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)

Community Beat Officer (CBO)

Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC)

Personal Development Profile (PDP)

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA)

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This research has arisen out of two curiosities. The first of these is a curiosity about how power might best be defined, understood, and explained. The second is a curiosity about the internal workings of the police organization. Curiosity, however, turns quickly into concern when the two elements are considered in relation to each other, when the focus becomes power as it is manifest within the police organization.

When power and the police are considered in combination, a number of questions soon arise. For example, what are the different ways in which power has been theoretically conceptualized, and which of these might be most useful in explaining power in the police organization? How does the police organization seek to control the way officers use their legal powers over the public? How does the nature of police work influence power within the police organization? What range of organizational practices might be associated with power? How do the gendered aspects of police culture interact with other power-related practices in the organization? Furthermore, how does one even research power in the police organization, and what is it that is to be researched?

In light of these questions, this chapter will first briefly introduce the concerns of this thesis. It will then present a range of different theoretical perspectives on power, and will outline the rationale behind selecting the power perspectives of Max Weber and Michel Foucault as key in the present analysis of power, before outlining the context of the

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<sup>1</sup> Autobiographically speaking, this combined concern about power in the police is a direct consequence of the researcher having grown up in pre-democratic South Africa, during an era in which excesses of police coercive power over the public went unchecked, and reached extremes only recently exposed. This thesis derives at least in part from a quest to understand how the police organization itself might exacerbate or encourage such excesses.

empirical research in the police organization. In conclusion, the chapter will set out the organization of the remainder of this thesis.

## **Introducing the research**

The primary intention of this thesis is to explore theories and practices of power. To that end, the analysis will pay close and critical attention to a number of theories of power, and will also use the empirical example of the police organization as a means through which to explore the strengths and weaknesses of these different theoretical perspectives. The analysis will pay detailed attention to questions of epistemology and ontology, because assumptions about knowledge and ontology are crucial in shaping the limits and possibilities of any exploration of power. Considerations of epistemological and ontological constraints and the way they shape different theories of power will inform the whole analysis, whether considering power theories, discussing methodological issues, or in the interrogation of theory in light of empirical data, or vice versa.

While engagement with theoretical conceptualizations of power is both challenging and informative (e.g. Clegg, 1989a), it is possible to extend these in light of critical engagement with empirical data on the practices of power in organizations, and in the present study, in the police organization. Accordingly, the present work will seek to extend the terms of debate about the theory and practice of power in some measure in its focus on how power operates in cultures, organizational practices, and notions of subjectivity and identity management. These themes will be examined in a number of ways: firstly, by setting out and exploring different sociological and organizational theories of power; secondly, by considering a range of power-related practices in the police organization, in light of theoretical approaches to power; and thirdly, by seeking to push forward theories of power in light of the (theoretically informed) empirical analysis. An additional and consequential contribution of the research will be to bring to the police literature a critical perspective on organizations that has been largely lacking to date.

The next section of this introduction will set out an overview of different theoretical approaches to power, while evaluating which of these might be most fruitful for the present exploration of power in the empirical context of the police. The remainder of the chapter will then briefly introduce the study of power in the context of the police organization, before outlining the detailed structure of this thesis.

### **Introducing perspectives on power**

The conceptualization of power is a contentious issue which has attracted the attention of many social theorists with widely different views (e.g. Clegg, 1989a for a synthesis of theoretical perspectives on power). Some have attempted to pin down an essential, often mechanistic, definition of the way in which power operates (e.g. Dahl, 1957). Others have highlighted the significance of the interface between structures in society and individual agency as the means through which power can best be understood (e.g. Giddens, 1976). More recently there has been some consideration of how power operates in practice (e.g. Foucault, 1980). The extensive range of views and approaches to studying power illustrates the extent to which this remains highly contested theoretical terrain.

This brief review will highlight five general approaches to the conceptualization of power, and suggest some of the implications of each approach for the analysis of power in the police. It is worth making the point at the outset that much of the literature on power neglects to focus upon how power operates in practice. As the interrelationship between power and practice is a key issue in the present study, the implications of this neglect for the present study are significant.

Both Durkheim (1964) and Parsons (1967) adopt a **functionalist approach** to their respective interpretations of power as interdependence. They shared an over-arching concern with the way in which a society could achieve social order. Integral to both arguments is the idea of consensus-based social order, which requires co-operation and



reciprocity from individuals. Parsons in particular argues that it is as socialized actors that individuals participate in the shaping and transmission of normative order over time. In his view it is within this context of norms that power is exercised. Both theorists have been criticized for being both over socialized and inadequate in dealing with social conflict and change. Giddens (1968:264) criticizes Parsons for virtually ignoring, 'quite consciously and deliberately, the necessarily hierarchical character of power, and the divisions of interest which are frequently consequent upon it'. The latter criticism has clear implications for the study of power in the hierarchy conscious police service. Furthermore, recent evidence on the extent of sexual harassment in the police service (Anderson *et al.*, 1993) raises questions about the extent to which such an emphasis on co-operative interaction is useful in understanding prevailing power practices.

One of Weber's central contributions to debates about power was his conceptualization of power in terms of **domination**. Simply put, Weber had a fascination with what he regarded as the technical supremacy of the bureaucratic form of organization. Yet, he also expressed unease about the apparent structural domination implicit in this argument, and accordingly engaged with the limits and scope of social action within economic and social structures (e.g. Weber, 1968). He introduced to debates concepts about the meaning attached by individuals to their actions, and placed much emphasis on rational intent, appropriate to the Enlightenment-led thinking of his time. Actors had to think about actions, for them to be construed as socially meaningful. This emphasis on rational meaning, as well as the apparent inevitability of the so-called iron cage of bureaucracy have attracted criticism as narrow in the case of the former, and over-determined in the case of the latter prediction. However, as ensuing chapters will illustrate, Weberian notions of rationality and bureaucracy are a crucial starting point in an analysis of power that draws on the empirical example of the quasi-militaristic bureaucratic police organization.

An example of a **radical view** of power is presented by Braverman (1974). Drawing on a Marxian perspective, Braverman also interprets power in terms of domination, albeit writing within a Marxian framework. He argues that de-skilling and routinization of work are central to the logic of capitalist development. Braverman sees the outcome of this exercise of capitalist power as the degradation of work and the reduction of status differentials between workers. Braverman regards disciplinary power mechanisms such as de-skilling and routinization in the factory context 'as the outcome of the intentional acts of the power of capitalists' (Clegg, 1989a:168). While Braverman has been accused of oversimplifying the degree of de-skilling and ignoring the potential for resistance to management pressures (e.g. Thompson & McHugh, 1990), he opens the door to further debate on power as it is expressed at an organizational level. However, this analysis of the division of labour within a capitalist mode of production is not the most appropriate theoretical perspective on power to inform an empirical analysis that is based on a non-industrial, public service sector such as the police. The police after all are not explicitly engaged in the production of surplus value, despite recent devolution of budgetary accountability to local Constabularies by the Home Office.

A number of **feminist** and pro-feminist writers (e.g. Hearn, 1992: 1987; Cockburn, 1991; Walby, 1990;) have conceptualized power in terms of patriarchal relations. As Cockburn (1991:6) puts it: 'what feminism proposes is that we should understand female subordination as *systemic*. That is, not casual, but structured ... with a tendency to self-reproduction'. The concept encompasses familial and economic spheres, and is seen by some to interact with relations of class and race (e.g. Ramazanoglu, 1989). However, it is worth noting that the analytical usefulness of patriarchy is not shared by all feminists (e.g. Barrett, 1980). It is also worth questioning the usefulness of such a general theory in the proposed analysis of complex interrelationships between a number of power-related practices that might be associated with gender, with competing hierarchical practices, or even with managerial practices in the police organizations.

To some extent both Giddens (1979; 1976) and Foucault (1977) attempt to integrate a functionalist view with a radical view of power. One important implication of this **critical** integrative approach to **social theory** is the possibility of power being both constraining and productive, and this approach will inform later analysis of power in this research.

Contrary to the radical view explored earlier, Giddens proposes that power should not *necessarily* be viewed as an obstacle to freedom, but rather as the means of achieving freedom. Giddens' theoretical approach to power is encapsulated in the notion of the dialectic of control, in which he emphasizes degrees of autonomy and interdependence. This conceptualization of power developed from Giddens' structuration theory (1976), in which he focuses on the problem of the relationship between structure and action by individual agents. In structuration theory Giddens attempts simultaneously to avoid an over-concentration on both determinism and voluntarism when developing social theory. He seeks to recognize how individuals are able to act and exert influence upon the power structures that exert influence over them.

The theory of structuration has not escaped criticism, and numerous reviewers express scepticism as to whether the synthesis between structure and action is actually achieved to the extent that Giddens proposes. Clegg (1989a:140) argues that the duality attempted in structuration theory leans towards an overemphasis of the voluntarist, individualist side of the dualism. Similarly, Habermas (1982) argues that in Giddens' approach structure becomes secondary to the human agents who are said to constitute those structures. Power is seen to rest overly with individuals.

Central to Foucault's argument, on the other hand, is the relational and shifting nature of power, expressed through potentially changing networks and alliances (Foucault, 1981). He was particularly concerned to critique the individualism of Sartre's existentialism and the Marxism of Althusser's structuralism, both of which were in the ascendancy in France when Foucault began to write. Consequently, Foucault breaks with traditions that

interpret power in any mechanistic, episodic manner. In particular it is the practices that give power effect upon which he concentrates. Foucault's (1977) conceptualization of power, as a technique used to achieve strategic ends through its disciplinary character, is an example of this focus on practices of power. In his view, disciplinary power works through creating routine conformity, whereby subjects learn to survey and control themselves.

In Foucault's work on sexuality (1986; 1985; 1981) he traces nineteenth century discourses of sexuality, and the consequent development and definition of what was to be regarded as 'normal' thought, speech and existence. Through this historical enquiry into bio-power, and his discussions of disciplinary power, Foucault presents a view very different from earlier emphases on sovereign power (Hobbes, 1962; Lukes, 1974) where power is seen as repressive and episodic (Clegg, 1989a).

A key Foucauldian theme reflected in both disciplinary power and bio-power is the interconnection between power / knowledge. Following Foucault, (1980:52) 'the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power'. This focus on the practices of power is particularly significant in that it attempts to highlight the way in which structure and agency are produced through discourse. Agency may be given to some, while being denied to others; similarly, structures may be seen to have determined some things and not others. That power can therefore be said to be at work in many sites, and at many levels has implications for empirical studies of power in organizations. Foucault's emphasis on *discursive practices* may prove to be particularly useful in understanding how power operates in practice within the police force. Both he and Giddens proffer views of power that are at once constraining and productive, which, for the purpose of this study invites exploration of the interplay between power and subjectivity. This widens the scope of questions to be asked and practices to be observed, and presents the opportunity to consider important discursive practices of power.

It is necessary to highlight that Foucault's approach to power is not without its critics. For example, a number of feminist theorists (e.g. Weedon, 1987) have welcomed Foucault's post-modernist analysis in which power is seen to exist in historically constituted discourses. Others, however, (e.g. Ramazanoglu, 1993; McNay, 1992) are more critical, in particular of his concentration on sexuality while neglecting gender, and of potential political implications of the manner in which post-structuralist ideas may be applied.

In sum, on the basis of the foregoing review of five different theoretical conceptualizations of power, the present analysis will draw particularly from the ideas and perspectives of Weber and Foucault with regard to power. Their respective approaches have been highly influential in the study of organizations (e.g. McKinlay & Starkey, 1998; Clegg 1994a; 1994b; Ray & Reed, 1994), and are of particular relevance to this study of theories and practices of power in the police context. The contributions of organizational theory with regard to the study of power will be explored further in Chapter 3.

### **Power in the context of the police organization**

Through the empirical analysis of one force, this study examines the conditions, processes and consequences of embedded power relations in the police in order to contribute to debates on the conceptualization of power. It will focus on the often inter-related practices of management techniques, different hierarchies in the organization, and gendered power asymmetries in the police. The research took place at a time when the quasi-bureaucratic model of an authoritarian command structure that is said to prevail within police forces (Jermier & Berkes, 1979) was under particular scrutiny (e.g. Home Office, 1993; Sheehy, 1993), and at a time when the techniques and assumptions of management are in something of an ascendancy in the police. In addition, the fieldwork took place shortly after Anderson, Brown & Campbell (1993) published their findings of extensive and ongoing sexual harassment and gender discrimination in their study of ten

police constabularies. These much-publicized research findings were to become a factor that had some impact on the formulation of the present research, as methodological discussions will illustrate in later chapters.

The police service has introduced many changes in management procedures in recent years. Such changes include a 'new managerialism' in the service, which seeks to introduce management techniques such as performance appraisal systems, grievance procedures, management development schemes, and equal opportunities policies. The apparent drive to 'change' the police organization has often been linked with attempts to change the intransigent (masculinist) culture of the police (e.g. Brown, 1992). However, while the police are the frequent subject of academic study, there is no link in the police literature with research on power as investigated in other places of work, nor with critical organizational perspectives on behaviour in, and management of, organizations. This study seeks to bring to the study of police organizations that critical approach, and to that end will consider a range of power-related practices in the police, associated with the rise of 'new managerialism', notions of hierarchy, and gendered power-related practices. This thesis argues that an analysis of the police organization, informed by sociological theories of power, goes further towards *interpreting and explaining* many of the new and old practices associated with culture in the organization than does the existing police literature.

It is worth emphasizing that the intention behind the present analysis is not to produce a new overarching theory of power, one that explains all. The ambition is the more modest, and likely one, of using the empirical example of the police organization as a means through which to expand in some measure our understanding of power, while at the same time to use a power perspective to inform analysis of discourses and practices in the police service.

There is an important point to make here: it is precisely because the police as an organization have legally sanctioned coercive powers through which they can *enforce* their influence over the public that a close and critical consideration of power at work *within* the police organization is essential. Police officers have a range of legally-defined powers at their disposal, and they have much discretion over the enforcement of those laws. For example, officers have powers to stop and search members of the public when there is apparent cause for suspicion; in arresting someone they have the capacity to take away personal liberty, even if only for a limited period of time. Officers have the legal authority to impose their (legally defined) 'will' on members of the public in ways that ordinary citizens do not. Furthermore, while it is beyond the purpose and scope of the present study to engage explicitly with legal police powers over communities, or their enactment of that power and discretion, this thesis does seek in its analysis to show how the nature of police work influences practices of power *within* the police organization

Throughout this thesis, the Police Service of England and Wales will be referred to as the English police, as the force in which the research was conducted is in England. While this ignores the Welsh component, it is less confusing than referring to the British police, which might be misconstrued to include the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The explicit paramilitary duties of the RUC are markedly different from those of the English police. Indeed, Reiner (1991:vii) describes the police in England and Wales as 'benign' in comparison with some police forces elsewhere. The Scottish police also operate as a separate organization and within a separate legal system. This thesis will therefore refer to the English police in the interests of brevity and clarity, despite the actuality that there is no national police force (Emsley, 1991:1).

## **Conclusion and Map**

Later chapters will introduce theories of power in more depth, and will explore the police organization in greater detail. For the moment it is sufficient to outline the underlying

assumptions of the study in light of the foregoing introductions of power and the police context. These are that:

- 1) in order to understand many seemingly intransigent practices within the police force it is necessary to explore the analytical significance of power as expressed in structure, discourse and practices, and;
- 2) that identities are negotiated in a complex environment in which success and status are informed and defined largely by a history of white, male practices.

Having introduced the intentions of this research, and before turning in the next chapter to a detailed consideration of Weber and Foucault's perspectives on power, this introductory chapter will conclude by mapping out the organization of the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter 2 will outline in some detail the ideas and approaches of Weber and Foucault, both of whom offer perspectives on power that are particularly pertinent to the present study. From Weber we derive a greater understanding of the assumptions that inform bureaucracy, while Foucault draws attention to the importance of practices of power, themes which will be developed in the ensuing analysis. The chapter will also outline the philosophical orientation and foundations of both scholars' ideas. Chapter 3 will then present important critiques of both scholars' work, and will clarify themes critical to the present analysis of power in the police organization. It will also introduce and emphasize the utility of recent studies that highlight subjectivity and identity concerns as important aspects of power in organizations. Chapter 4 will take a necessary look at the principles underpinning different claims about knowledge and research, and will argue that positivist methods are inappropriate to a study of power in the police. The chapter will also outline the related significance of debates about the nature of modernism and post-modernism, in order to locate the origins of the bureaucratic form adopted by the police organization in the assumptions that inform modernity, and to pave the way for the use of



deconstructive methods in the present research. The chapter will also locate the epistemological assumptions of the present work.

Chapters 5 and 6 introduce the police organization, from inception to current concerns with management. These chapters also provide a critical overview of the wealth of related literature on the police, and lay the groundwork for the ensuing empirical analyses. Chapter 5 will place contemporary concerns with managing the police into historical context and the discussion lays the foundations for a critical review in Chapter 6 of the problem of police culture, which is at the heart of much management endeavour. The discussion also problematizes the historic and contemporary place of women in the police organization. Chapter 7 marks the start of the empirical analyses of this thesis, and will outline practicalities of the research methodology, and perhaps most importantly, will present data about power practices that arise out of the research process. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 detail the empirically informed analyses of a range of sometimes interrelated power practices, drawing on the interview data and non-participative observation of officers at work. Chapter 8 is a critique of managerialism as it is pursued in the one police constabulary at present. The analysis considers officers' interactions with and responses to some of the explicitly managerial practices employed in the organization, *and* with still-present formal hierarchies of control. Chapter 9 presents an analysis of some of the ways in which concerns with subjectivity and identity are exacerbated by the sometimes competing demands of traditional cultural practices in the organization, and of newly managerial practices. Chapter 10 seeks to highlight and problematize the ongoing gendered power asymmetries in the organization, and considers the ways in which women officers respond to and interact with the prevailing (male) hierarchy and culture.

In conclusion, Chapter 11 will explore the theoretical and practical implications that arise out of the two dominant and competing modes of rationality in the police: bureaucratic rationality and managerial rationality. The discussion draws together theoretical and practical aspects of the present study of power in the police, and highlights the findings

and contributions of the research, in particular with regards to notions of subjectivity, and resistance. The chapter concludes the thesis by exploring problematic issues that emerge in the analysis of power in the police, and suggests ways in which the present research might be developed.

## Chapter 2

### Theories of power

Having introduced in the previous chapter the general concerns of the present research, and a number of different theoretical perspectives on power, this chapter will focus on the approaches of Max Weber and Michel Foucault with regard to power in some detail. The discussion and analysis will place the ideas of Weber and Foucault in context in terms of their philosophical heritage, followed by a description of their respective contributions to debates about the nature of power, central to this thesis.<sup>1</sup>

A study of power, informed by an empirical study of the police, invites analysis to begin with a detailed consideration of Weber's ideas on bureaucracy, authority, rationality and legitimacy. It was, after all, Weber himself who remarked that 'no special proof is necessary to show that military discipline is the ideal model for the modern capitalist factory' (Weber, 1948:261, cited in Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980:75), by extension proposing the military as the model on which large scale organizations should be ordered and administered.

One of the intentions of the empirical aspect of the present analysis is to make the on-going influence of Weberian ideas on rationality an explicit feature of the intra-organizational analysis of the police, in conjunction with that of Foucault. Bradley, Walker & Wilkie (1986:125) connect their discussion of police bureaucracy with Weber in passing. His legacy is *implicit* in Reiner (1992), Walker (1994) and others. Indeed,

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<sup>1</sup> Both authors were prolific in their scholarly output, and their respective ideas have generated a huge secondary literature. This chapter intends to introduce the key concepts of both scholars with regard to power, as a foundation for the present empirical study of the police. It is beyond the scope of the present study to present a complete critique of either or both Weber and Foucault.

Weber is the common-sense starting point when considering power in the police, precisely because the history and development of the organization in England is so steeped in the ideology of bureaucracy, themes which will be further explored in later chapters.<sup>2</sup>

However, Foucault's concerns with notions of social control and discipline are also of importance in the present analysis of power. He was particularly interested in the productive relation between power and knowledge as they operate in practice. The application of the ideas and perspectives of both Weber and Foucault are of central importance in the study of power in general, and their respective approaches to organizational power relations are especially relevant to what follows in this thesis.

The discussion in this chapter will first place the ideas and work of Weber in context, in terms of: his philosophical heritage; rationality and method; and his influential ideas on the interrelated themes of domination, legitimacy, bureaucracy, power, and authority. The chapter will then place the ideas of Foucault in context, in terms of: his philosophical orientation; notions of discourse and method; and with regard to his approach to power/knowledge, discipline and surveillance. All of these are themes that are important in the ensuing analysis in this thesis.

### **Max Weber in context (1864 - 1920)**

It is necessary to acknowledge at the outset of this chapter that the intellectual endeavours of Weber encompassed a wide range of disciplines. His early interest in the impact of prevailing legal systems on economic conditions during medieval times was developed in his next major work, in which Weber explored the impact of Roman agrarian history on

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<sup>2</sup> Dandeker (1991) elsewhere draws on the legacy of Weber and Foucault in combination in his analysis of surveillance and Modernity. Dandeker includes the police organization as an example of increasing institutional surveillance capacities.

public and private law. He went on the following year to publish a significant volume on East Prussian rural labour (Miller, 1963). These early examples illustrate the depth and breadth of Weber's intellectual vision. His interest was as much methodological as it was to do with the particular details of economics, history or the law. Weber was concerned with the merits of large comparative studies, one of the best known of which is his work on the Protestant Work Ethic, a study conducted in Germany, which he later contrasted with values that underpinned Confucian rationalism in China (Miller, 1963).

Rex (1991) usefully summarizes four key features of Weber's approach and work. In the first instance, his work attends through history to the complexity and diversity of social structures. In addition, his work demands acknowledgement of an action frame of reference, whereby social structures are seen to emerge as a consequence of human action. Thirdly, Weber attempts to impose some order on the complexity of his subject matter by systematizing concepts, often by means of ideal types developed in the context of his historical studies, which are then related and contrasted with each other, and later still deduced from social forms. Fourthly, Weber's concern with meaning and action demands that questions be asked about the 'value standpoint' (Rex, 1991: 239) of the researcher and subject matter. These themes will be touched upon throughout this chapter.

### ***Philosophical orientation and heritage***

Max Weber's intellectual roots are located in the philosophical ideas of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Kant is said to have laid the foundations of German philosophical thought for well over a century. In his so-called philosophy of transcendental idealism, Kant profoundly reformulated the prevailing views of German intellectual endeavour. He located reason, the unification of

consciousness,<sup>3</sup> and synthesis of thought at the centre of German intellectual and cultural concern. Weber, like other German intellectuals of the time, was unavoidably informed and intellectually influenced by the prevailing cultural Kantian heritage (Kasler, 1988). Such was the influence of Kantian philosophy that the technical language and concepts specific to his philosophical system became absorbed into the taken for granted discourse of the time. It was therefore possible for Weber to be informed by Kantian ideas without having any formal training as a philosopher, and to use, without definition, terminology of the day, such as 'reality', 'the world', and 'values', and of particular significance in the work of Weber, the concept of reason.

Although opinion has long been divided as to whether Weber can be considered to have had an explicit concern with theories of knowledge, Weber's work was nonetheless developed within a framework of knowledge, and one which was informed by assumptions about knowledge (e.g. Albrow, 1990; Kasler, 1988).<sup>4</sup> The pervasive belief in the capacity of the intellect to introduce order into an essentially chaotic world was a central Kantian tenet that Weber not only took for granted, but around which he developed his own arguments on rationality and bureaucracy. Weber's determination to impose order on the social structures he observed through intellect and reason is a truly Kantian project. This reason was located in the individual, an entity separate from others, in whom resides the capacity to have thoughts.

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<sup>3</sup> Kant was concerned with the unification of consciousness in order to bring together apparently unrelated ideas in pursuit of unity and systematic thought. In addition, he was highly influential in advancing the view that 'reality' existed only in thought, beyond which no experience or fact existed. His was a quest that sought to locate the 'ultimate foundations of thought' (Albrow, 1990:30). More will be said of this type of Enlightenment emphasis on grand unifying theories in the following chapter.

<sup>4</sup> Chapter 4 will pursue a more detailed discussion of the significance of epistemological and ontological assumptions for research in general, and the present research in particular.

*Kant's philosophy is dominated by the drive to find unity in multiplicity and that unity is to be found ultimately in the transcendental 'P'. Unity is not found in the relations between objects or people, it is not empirical, natural or social, but logical (Albrow, 1990:35).<sup>5</sup>*

Into the debates about tension between the rational and the irrational, between thought and feeling, came the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's intention was to reject Christian beliefs, and simultaneously to refute the arguments used by opponents of Christianity. His ambitious project, expressed in much of his writing (e.g. Nietzsche, 1910), was to negate the notions of independent reason, or mind, thought, or consciousness. He regarded the concept of truth untenable, linked as it was in the Kantian tradition to an other, spiritual world. In this quest, Nietzsche took on the intellectual establishment of the day in his determination to disrupt the respect accorded to philosophical argument and rigour. In sum, Nietzsche's critique of nineteenth-century philosophical discourse placed the free-willed superman in direct opposition to Kant's reasoning individual. Through this free, sensual individual, Nietzsche sought to overcome the dualism inherent in Kant's material and spiritual worlds. Nietzsche's superman was to combine reason, sensuality, will, and feeling (Albrow, 1990:52).

From both Kant and Nietzsche, Weber derived a heritage in which the individual was the central actor in the world – although it has been argued that Weber saw leadership as deriving from a class of people in the context of particular economic conditions (Albrow, 1990:59). For Weber, this class was made up of the bourgeoisie. Weber was inclined to espouse a Nietzschean view of multiplicity, and to criticize simplistic explanations. However, Weber rejected Nietzsche's superman, but was in accord with him on the significance of power. Weber's approach placed limits on the irrationalism central to

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<sup>5</sup> Associated with this distinction between the 'chaotic world' and the 'reasoning unified individual' is the Protestant Christian belief so prevalent at the time in the distinction between the material world, and the spiritual world (Albrow, 1990:37). Kant acknowledged that reason ultimately reached a point beyond which it had no claim. In this sense, Kant, like Weber, is a product of the Protestant beliefs of the time, from which emerged Weber's well-known *Protestant Work Ethic* (1958).

Nietzsche's arguments, in part because he still held onto a belief in the Protestant place of duty and the Kantian ethic of intellectual integrity. His notion of leadership then was one which involved responsibility rooted in duty and intellect, whereas Nietzsche's superman was grounded in and limited by neither.<sup>6</sup>

The Protestant and Kantian definitions of reality provided Weber both with the cognitive framework for his view of life and with a motivational structure. The world was mastered by reason, but intellect was accompanied by duty and the need for salvation. The sharpness of conflict between rationality and irrationality was not a mere intellectual problem, it was a dilemma he felt deeply (Albrow, 1990:46), and one which found expression in his later works on rational bureaucracy.

### *Rationality and method*

Brubaker (1984) describes Weber's idea of rationality as a theme which unifies much of his often diverse and disparate empirical work. One of Weber's key concerns was to explain how rationalization peculiar to Western civilization developed, and why it took on particular forms.

It is significant that Weber himself acknowledged the difficulty in defining rationality in any simplistic way such as to satisfy all usage of the word. Brubaker (1984:1) cites an example of Weber's own footnoted acknowledgment of this multiplicity of meaning: 'If this essay makes any contribution at all, may it be to bring out the complexity of the only superficially simple concept of the rational' (Weber, 1958:194).

Despite the acknowledgment of the complexity inherent in the term, Weber used rationality in frequently different contexts without definition or explanation. Brubaker cites sixteen different uses of the word in Weber's diverse writings, albeit allowing for

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<sup>6</sup> Albrow makes the crucial point as follows: '...the English-speaking world ... on discovering his affinities with Nietzsche, has found profound difficulty in recognising that Weber's relations with him were ones of



the possibility of some overlap between a number of the examples. The list, derived by Brubaker (1984:2) from Weber's writing on modern capitalism and of ascetic Protestantism, is as follows: 'deliberate, systematic, calculable, impersonal, instrumental, exact, quantitative, rule-governed, predictable, methodical, purposeful, sober, scrupulous, efficacious, intelligible and consistent'.

It is through his ideas on rationality that Weber's empirical, methodological, moral political writings are most strongly connected (Brubaker, 1984). The key to understanding Weber's claim that social sciences are able to understand and explain action lies in his insistence on the capacity for men [sic] to act rationally.

Weber was indeed an advocate of interpretative sociology, so-called *verstehende* sociology, whereby his intent was to explain social phenomena in terms of the subjective meaning of an individual's action. He was therefore most interested in the forms and purposes of subjective rationality, as opposed to objective rationality. 'Subjective rationality depends on the clarity and self-consciousness of the actor's inner orientation, objective rationality on the extent to which action measures up to an objective standard' (Brubaker, 1984:5). In Weber's view only a small number or class of events fall into the objective rationality category.

Weber also makes an important distinction between formal and substantive rationality, and explores the tension at the heart of this distinction. This tension is crucial to understanding Weber's exploration of the phenomenon of rationality, while he also expresses a deep concern about the threat posed, in his view, to human freedom by rampant bureaucratic rationalization. He remained ambivalent about bureaucratic organization, and retained a moral scepticism about the ways in which such rationality

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intimate knowledge and profound detachment' (1990:61).

might be applied.<sup>7</sup> While advocating the technical efficiency of rationality, Weber was sceptical at a moral level as to the capacity for rationality to necessarily bring about advances to human well-being.<sup>8</sup> It is in this contradiction that the often-cited phrase, the so-called iron-cage of capitalism, or of bureaucracy, is grounded. For Weber, the material conditions of rationalized economic production might well have created efficiency and fostered output; at the same time, however, the consequence was the dehumanizing and removal of emotion from organization and administration. Concepts such as 'fraternal' were apparently quashed, along with the emotions which may have driven such concerns. In this way, Weber highlights the point that 'what is rational from one point of view may be non-rational or irrational from another, and vice versa' (Brubaker, 1984:4). In this contradiction, Weber recognizes the limitations of rationality as an organizing principle.

Lash & Whimster (1987:3) argue that, in the decades after the Second World War, Weber was inappropriately presented as a founder of positivist sociology. Despite his lifelong engagement with the ideas of Marx, he was accused of being orthodox and conservative where Marx was radical. In other words, Weber stood accused of embracing the validity of the claims of positivism and intellectual orthodoxy, as opposed to Marx, who was seen to be offering a radical critique based on humanistic values grounded in a belief in collective action and moral conviction. Instead, these authors suggest that in his later work in particular, Weber had a radical intent. His concerns were against a positivistic conception of science through which the cultural problems of humankind were reduced to an emphasis on behaviour and objectivity. In this context, Weber's concern was not only with the methodologies of social science:

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<sup>7</sup> Weber had a deep concern about the degree of nepotism that characterized the German public sector of the time. He saw in bureaucracy a system of organization that could create and reinforce meritocratic decision making.

<sup>8</sup> Chapter 4 will describe and explore in greater detail the claims made in the name of rationality during the eighteenth century Enlightenment period.

*... this legacy is not solely a sophisticated methodology of social science, but has rightly been perceived as a more general, existential stance to questions of knowledge, values, truth and commitment in a world where modern science and rationality should signify the elimination of illusion (Lasch & Whimster, 1987:3).*

In sum, Weber's methodological concerns are with addressing the difference in emphasis and claims of the phenomenological at one extreme, and positivism on the other.

*What we can do, what the actor does, and what sociologists do is to offer a hypothesis that claims to explain the pattern of action-orientation or motivation that lies behind the observed behaviour. This hypothesis does not claim to tell us anything about the actor's own motivation. It is simply an explanatory device. (Rex, 1991:242)*

In this approach, the actor is central, and so is the interpretation offered by the sociologist.

### ***Domination, legitimacy, bureaucracy, power and authority***

Recent interest in the writings of Weber for the development of organization theory seeks to emphasize a broader range of themes in his work than the more usual emphasis on bureaucracy. Clegg (1994a:67), for example, suggests that the so-called iron cage of bureaucracy should be regarded as a cultural construct rather than a rational construct. Clegg argues that organization analysis has engaged in a process of selective attention in terms of Weber's work as a whole. His broad-ranging concerns were increasingly interpreted far more narrowly, and he cites the by-now classic Aston Studies as an example of selectivity (e.g. Pugh, 1988).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Pugh and Hickson (1976) undertook extensive empirical research as to the relative influence of structural variables on organizations (see also Pugh, 1988). The authors presented five dimensions most likely to inform organization structure: formalization, specialization, standardization, centralization, and configuration.

In the context of the present research, however, it is Weber's ideas on bureaucracy that, in the first instance, demand attention because of the direct parallels between these ideas and a number of significant, enduring organizational practices characteristic of the police service. It is necessary therefore to elaborate in some descriptive detail on Weber's conception of bureaucracy, followed by the related themes of authority, legitimate order, power, and rationality<sup>10</sup>.

It is perhaps in his writing on bureaucracy that Weber has gained most recognition in the English-speaking world following the post-war translation of a number of his major works into English.<sup>11</sup> In its most basic terms, Weber's concern with bureaucracy is in part a response to Marxian ideas (e.g. Ritzer, 1998). Weber sought to refute Marx's emphasis on economic determinism across whole social classes, and offered instead the suggestion that stratification within different social classes was inevitable. Within this view of class structure, position could be attained either through material means, following Marx, or through the acquisition of specialized skills. Within this social stratification, Weber further argued for the existence of different status groups, status being accorded through the social estimation of other groups and individuals. Therefore, it was possible that status and class offered competing 'structures of stratification relating specifically to the distribution of power' (Swingewood, 1991:184). The concept of stratification, expressed

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<sup>10</sup> An extensive critique of the bureaucracy / efficiency arguments proposed by Weber has developed over a number of years, in particular in terms of the informal organization. The early Human Relations writers argued the case for the affective, sentient individual as a creative source of innovation and flexibility in the organization (e.g. Burns and Stalker, 1961; Blau, 1955; Gouldner, 1954; Merton, 1949; Selznick, 1943; and a recent review in Morgan, 1996, which will be considered in Chapter 3). Recently, there have been some valuable feminist critiques of bureaucracy (e.g. Bologh, 1990; Ferguson, 1984), of which more will also be said in chapter 3. At the same time it is worth bearing in mind that Mouzelis (1967:63) makes the different but nonetheless relevant point that criticisms of Weber's concept of bureaucracy miss the point that his bureaucracy is presented as an ideal type, in the Weberian sense of the word. In other words, Mouzelis argues that Weber's ideal type conceptualization of bureaucracy is premised on an assumption of the organization performing its function with maximum efficiency. It should be acknowledged that, as with much of Weber's work, contention exists with regard to the 'ideal type' construct; for present purposes it is sufficient to acknowledge the on-going critique of bureaucracy as presented by Weber, without being drawn away from the detail of his construct.

<sup>11</sup> Two influential examples of Weber in translation are those produced by Talcott Parsons (Weber, 1947), and also Gerth and Mills (1948).

here in terms of Weber's ideas on class, permeates his thinking on domination, and therefore on bureaucracy, as an expression of the means through which domination is achieved in a modern society.

Weber's definition of power is one of the most frequently cited in the sociological literature. The basic formulation of this definition, in terms of social action, is that power is the potential or opportunity for an individual, or group, to 'realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in their action' (Gerth & Mills, 1948:180). This formulation of power places emphasis on *power over* another individual, group or event (Lukes, 1986). Weber crucially argues that there is *no single source of power*, nor any single reason for exercising power.

Weber's ideas on bureaucracy lead from these concerns with power, class and stratification.<sup>12</sup>, and from a recognition that power was in significant ways, embedded in political and bureaucratic organizations. Out of these ideas Weber developed his theory of bureaucratic domination. In the work of Weber, bureaucracy, domination, and power are therefore *crucially inter-linked concepts*. For Weber it was inevitable that increased division of labour, which he regarded as being a central organizing principle of the modern economy, would inevitably lead to increased bureaucratization.<sup>13</sup> In his view, industrial society is dominated by bureaucratic organizations and institutions. Clegg (1994a:51) makes this point clear:

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<sup>12</sup> Michel's (1962) so-called iron law of oligarchy reflects a recognition of the emergence of authority linked to a position in a hierarchical salaried bureaucracy. Civil servants in relation to democratically elected Members of Parliament would be a typical example. Later references to Weber's 'iron cage of bureaucracy' hark back to these ideas of Michels.

<sup>13</sup> Weber argued against socialism in terms of the potential for such a social system to substantially centralize power in institutions, which would be run by the bureaucratic official (Swingewood, 1991:190). The pessimism of Weber's so-called iron cage of bureaucracy is illustrated in this example. Whatever the economic, political or social gains from the apparent rational efficiency gains of bureaucratic organization, the gains are made at the expense and dehumanizing of the subject who, Weber argued, becomes a mere cog in the bureaucratic machine.

*In Weber's view the coming of modernity saw the "discipline" of bureaucracy encroaching on every sphere of life. The cause of this encroachment was the irresistible spread of organizations in the twentieth century. What made the advance inexorable was the ... "technical superiority" [of the bureaucratic form].*

Weber argued that the bureaucratic form was technically superior to other modes of organization and administration, in particular where large scale organization and planning of resources was required. This superiority was based on the utilization of specialist skills for organizational goals, the separation of personal, emotion concerns and interests from organizational interests. In addition, tasks are considered to be achieved with greater speed and efficiency, with ensuing lower costs (Haralambos & Holborn, 1991:410).<sup>14</sup>

Swingewood (1991:190) characterizes Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy as follows:

*Bureaucracy is characterised by the following characteristics: precision, speed, unambiguity [sic], knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination; the bureaucratic office has a clearly defined sphere of competence, its officials organised in a clearly defined hierarchy of positions, and appointed, not elected, on the basis of technical qualifications. Officials are personally free and subject only to authority in terms of their impersonal bureaucratic obligations.*

Seeking to develop Weberian thinking, Clegg (1994a:60) has recently delineated fifteen 'tendencies of bureaucracy'. Underpinning Weber's idea of the development and implementation of bureaucratic administration is the concept of rational action, which, in itself is a sub-set of his theory of human action. Weber regarded all human action as being motivated, and having meaning. He distinguished between affective action (that which stems from individual emotion), traditional action (based on repetition of

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<sup>14</sup> It is necessary once again to highlight the later critiques of the efficiency assumptions by the Human Relations School, and to acknowledge the on-going debates as to the meaning and utility of the Ideal Type (e.g. Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980; Albrow, 1970; Mouzelis, 1967) as a theoretical construct or empirical device.

customary action), and rational action. The latter action is systematic, goal oriented, based on the calculation of means and likely ends.

Bureaucracy is an expression of a rational attempt to impose a system of control over the activities of individuals acting within the organization. This quest for control is apparent in the listing of different characteristics of a bureaucracy cited above. One prerequisite for the effective functioning of a bureaucracy, and in particular, for the hierarchy of authority to function, in Weber's view, was a minimum requirement that the purpose of the organization be seen to be legitimate, along with its policies and staff (e.g. Clegg, 1994a).

For Weber, a key distinction between the related concepts of power and domination was that the latter encompasses the force of legitimacy (e.g. Kasler, 1979:155). Indeed, the concept of legitimacy serves to inform the related concept of authority, which in turn informs Weber's description of the influence of authority type on the formation of organization structures such as bureaucracy. Clearly it is useful to consider each of these concepts in turn.

Albrow (1990) makes the crucial point that the idea of authority in Weber's work is at least as significant as concepts such as social order. Paralleled with the three types of action outlined above, and informed by the notion of legitimacy, are Weber's often quoted models of three different 'pure types' of legitimate authority (Weber, 1947:328). Accordingly, organizational structures emerge as a consequence of the type of authority on which the control of action is achieved. Charismatic authority is likely to lead to an organization in which little hierarchy and few rules exist. Control is vested in the person of the leader. Once this leadership ends, rules and procedures are likely to be implemented to fill the directional void created as a consequence of the demise of the leader.

Traditional authority is likely to lead to an organizational structure characterized to some extent by dependency on either family ties, or landowners. The third type of authority, so-called rational–legal authority provides the basis for the development of bureaucratic organizational structure. As Giddens (1984:151) observes: ‘Weber concentrates on the “heartland” of bureaucracy – the state and its administrative offices’. Central to the effectiveness of that authority is the concept of legitimacy, and the concomitant expectation of minimum compliance by those participating in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Within a bureaucracy, compliance is to be achieved through means other than physical coercion, namely through a shared belief in the governing norms which regulate demands for compliance. Essential to Weber was the expectation that within a bureaucracy, individuals would adopt the norms and values of the organization concerned (Kasler, 1979:155). In other words, individuals would to some extent incorporate the goals and ethos of the organization into their own motivational action set. At the same time, Weber (1947) proposed that the organizational bureaucracy would actively seek to cultivate belief in its legitimacy, thereby proposing a combination of voluntarism on the part of participants, and determinism on the part of the institution. In this determinism lies Weber’s pessimistic belief in the inevitable and dehumanizing power of the iron cage of bureaucracy. Commands would be obeyed because of a belief in the authority of the issuing agent or institutional representative, and a belief by those actors involved that orders issued were in some way ‘binding for their actions’ (Albrow, 1990:162). It is in these terms that Weber departs significantly from Marx, in his determination to maintain as central the principle that it is individuals that act, not classes or collectivities. Albrow points out that for Weber, despite the pervasive influence of the bureaucratic ‘machine’, the individual actor should be held accountable for action, no matter how large the collective expression of that action

Throughout this section, it has become apparent that Weber’s conceptualization of power can be described as multiple, and it is the privileging of multiplicity that provides a useful



link at this point in the chapter between his ideas on power, and those presented by Michel Foucault, to which discussion now turns. It is perhaps in their philosophical heritages that Foucault and Weber have concerns in common.

### **Michel Foucault in context (1926-1984)**

Like Weber before him, Foucault's work is characteristically broad in focus and scope. While the impact of his work on the social sciences is unquestionable, by his own design his location within any of its traditional disciplines is problematic. If there is a unifying theme to his concerns, it might be 'his concern with the development of individuality in all of its modern forms, and especially its constitution within a web of power relations' (in Smart, 1985:7). For the purposes of the present work, it is Foucault's thoughts on those power relations that are of particular interest, and which will be described in greater detail. As in the previous section on Weber, however, it is necessary first to locate Foucault's intellectual endeavours within the context of the prevalent ideas of his time,<sup>15</sup> so as to better understand the impact and implications of his contributions on power/knowledge for the present study.

### ***Philosophical orientation and heritage***

Foucault undertook his initial studies of philosophy in the years leading up to the Second World War. The intellectual climate in which his ideas would have developed was characterized by two conflicting dominant trends. The established influence of Marxist structural materialism on intellectual thought was under sustained and effective attack from the 'philosophies of the subject' (Smart, 1985:13). In particular, the existentialism propounded by Sartre, and the phenomenology espoused by Merleau-Ponty placed a new

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<sup>15</sup> Foucault believed that present times are still appropriately designated 'modern'. He spoke of the continued prevalence since the beginnings of modernity of attitudes of 'countermodernity' (Foucault, 1986, cited in Smart, 1993:99). Elsewhere, McNay (1992:5) argues that Foucault's theory of practices of the self is an attempt to 'rework some of the Enlightenment central categories, such as the interrelated concepts of autonomy and emancipation'.

and influential philosophical emphasis on the significance and influence of individual consciousness, and individual freedom of choice. Foucault, once involved in the philosophy and practices of the time, turned to the study of psycho-pathology in the 1950s as a consequence of his disillusionment with the limitations of both spheres (Smart, 1985). He was to make further significant direction changes throughout his career, which in itself is a reflection of a key characteristic of his concerns, in so far as these changes reflected his interest in exposing and transcending the limitations inherent in the academic disciplines. As a result, his intellectual endeavours over time ranged amongst other themes from the early interest in the history of madness and reason (e.g. Foucault, 1976; 1975),<sup>16</sup> to concerns with the emergence of social and human sciences (e.g. Foucault, 1973), turning later to the subject of discipline and power (e.g. Foucault, 1977a), and still later to concerns with the history of sexuality (e.g. Foucault, 1979).

Foucault is well-known for evading the labels of competing academic disciplines (e.g. Gutting, 1994). This evasion is at least in part reflective of the nature of the intellectual task in which Foucault was engaged, namely that of exploring and revealing the *forms* which knowledge took, be it in the context of hospitals, prisons, or the social sciences. Although he himself developed detailed and overarching theories, such as that on the history of thought in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, having problematized notions of knowledge, he was loath to be seen to offer yet another authoritative discipline of knowledge (Gutting, 1994).

This concern with the forms of knowledge underlies Foucault's particular contribution on the interconnections between power and knowledge and subjectivity, to which this

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<sup>16</sup> Although not subject to the same length of delays between original publication and translation into English as Weber's works, these dates reflect the dates of publication into English, rather than the original publication which would have taken place a few years prior, in the case of Foucault, and a few decades in the case of Weber.

chapter will turn in due course. First it is useful to consider a number of key intellectual influences on Foucault's thought.

Clegg (1998), and others (e.g. Burrell 1988) locate Foucault's writings firmly in the European tradition of philosophical idealism. As in the case of Weber outlined earlier, Foucault was also significantly influenced by the intellectual heritage gained from a select group, in whose number were included in particular the ideas of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche. Smart (1985:14) argues that each of these thinkers contributed as follows:

*The significance accorded to the respective works of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche by Foucault lies in their delimitation of the space within which modern social thought is located and their founding role in the cultivation of a new hermeneutics, a new order of interpretation. In Foucault's view each of these thinkers recognized the existence of a form of a relation between forms of thought, ideas, and economic power.*

More particularly, for Marx, this relation was expressed between ideas, and economic power. From the Freudian perspective these interpretative concerns were presented in terms of the relation between desire and knowledge. And lastly, Nietzsche's 'will to power' expresses the relationship between all forms of thought and knowledge. Embedded in the intellectual heritage of these three thinkers is 1) concern to interpret the human condition; 2) interpretations that recognized conflict and power at work in the formation of social relations (in the case of Marx), the individual psyche (Freud), and at the level of humanity in general (Nietzsche). Smart (1985) usefully continues his consideration of Foucault's intellectual heritage in his comment that in the work of all three is the implication that not only is interpretation an endless task, but it is necessary precisely because no objects or essential underlying realities were there to be interpreted or named. In Nietzsche<sup>17</sup> and Freud in particular, Foucault inherited the notion that

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<sup>17</sup> Foucault's essay 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (in Bouchard, 1977) makes explicit the Nietzschean influence.

interpretation and re-interpretation were an infinite activity, and one interpretation was merely of yet another interpretation. The influence of Nietzsche in Foucault's later emphasis (e.g. *Discipline and Punish*) on the mutually constitutive power / knowledge relationship is apparent (e.g. Clegg, 1994b:157).

### ***Discourse and method***

It is clear from the preceding discussion that Foucault's concerns with the constitution of knowledge, be this in the context of the definition of madness, or the make-up of the human sciences, have implications for his approach to methodology. In particular, his philosophical heritage engendered in his thought grave doubts about the value of knowledge claims made within the empiricist framework (Burrell, 1988). In his case, this concern with the constitution of knowledge goes beyond a merely methodological concern, and explores the assumptions on which methodology and knowledge are based. These issues of epistemology will be further explored in later chapters. For the moment, it is useful to locate Foucault's work methodologically as it is out of these concerns that his later emphasis on discourse emerged, with which his ideas on power / knowledge, important in the context of the present work, are inextricably linked.

Burrell (1988) proposes a three-fold periodization of Foucault's work as a mechanism through which some order can be imposed on the often-unrelated works. Methodologically speaking, the first and second of these are of particular concern in the context of the present study. Firstly, the 'Archaeological Period', reveals Foucault's primary concern with discourse. His emphasis is on the examination of the production and formation of discourses on what and how particular practices and ideas gain pre-eminence in an era. Foucault (e.g. 1973) argued that over time what constitutes each period of thought (or so-called *episteme*) changes, and that each new discourse that emerges in a new time period is independent of the speaking subject.

Significantly, as Burrell remarks, Foucault's concern here is with discourse alone. The active knowing subject is of no consequence. Foucault further developed these ideas on 'the diversity of autonomous and sometimes amorphous discourses' (Burrell, 1988:223) in his work entitled *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1977b).<sup>18</sup>

At the heart of this 'archaeological method' is an intention to discover the rules that direct social practices. Following Burrell (1988), these rules might not be known to the participating actors. By contrast, in the ensuing so-called Genealogical Period<sup>19</sup>, it is practices rather than theory that become Foucault's focus of methodological concern (e.g. Foucault, 1979; 1977a). In particular, Foucault's genealogy is concerned with the inter-relationships between power, knowledge and the body. Here Foucault follows Nietzsche's lead in proposing that subjective motivations are to be found behind all claims to objectivity. Any claims to objectivity are, in Foucault's view, unavoidably informed by particular power concerns and motivations, and are only part of an on-going cycle of competition for domination. In methodological terms this translates for the researcher into a concern with small details, events and shifts. Foucault proposes that there are no underlying laws, only discontinuity, and as such written work is merely a record of the accidental and inevitably superficial events. Depth of meaning is not conceived of as possible or desirable. The genealogical focus is located in the present, and seeks only the location of traces of the present in the past (Burrell, 1988, citing Foucault, 1979; Weeks, 1981). This is not the same process as constructing an historical view.

In concluding this section, it is worth noting Burrell's (1988) comment that Foucault's penchant for adopting radically different positions from one work to the next marks him

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<sup>18</sup> It is in the context of this work that Foucault has attracted the label of 'structuralist'. Burrell argues that 'Foucault is structuralist enough to wish to displace the subject and consciousness from the centre of theoretical concern' (1988:223).

<sup>19</sup> Genealogy suggests the search for the unexpected, for discontinuities, an avoidance of overarching histories and laws, and is concerned with the superficial (Burrell, 1988:224).

at least as iconoclastic, but should also provoke some criticism as a problematic tactic. Foucault offered a host of significant yet often unrelated ideas in method and content, not all of which have particular relevance to the present work. However, his work on discipline, and on Power/Knowledge in particular will be selected for the potential analytical insight it might offer in the context of the present research of the police.

### ***Power/knowledge, discipline and surveillance***

In *Discipline and Punish* (1977a) Foucault offers a conceptualization of power that is deeply intertwined with techniques of discipline, and the concept of knowledge. The central idea in this work is that so-called disciplinary power is achieved through techniques of individual surveillance. The work was based upon consideration of the forms of correction and control adopted in the penal system during the eighteenth century in Pennsylvania, Tuscany, France and Prussia (Burrell, 1988). In Foucault's view, the forms of domination developed in these institutions relied on methods substantially more subtle than traditional forms of domination which relied for effect on fear for physical safety and survival through the use of brutal means. Domination based on surveillance was achieved through techniques directed at controlling and ensnaring the mind, soul and will of each individual (Burrell, 1988). Such techniques made use of the mere *potential* for knowledge about the individual's actions or thoughts, in order to ensure control over behaviour, a consequence of which is the potential for self-domination by the individual who operates on the chance that their actions and thoughts might be 'observed' by the authority figure in charge.

A brief description of the Benthamite surveillance device, the panopticon, provides a useful, if often cited, metaphor for some of the ideas encapsulated in Foucault's notion of disciplinary power. The panopticon consists of a circular tower-like building structure, from which prisoners could easily and anonymously be watched. The design was intended to elicit compliant behaviour from prisoners even during those times when they

were not actually being observed from the tower. In the uncertainty about the presence or absence of an observer, the inmate would discipline their own behaviour. Underpinning the effectiveness of this so-called disciplinary gaze is the potential for discovery, a form of knowledge which is the basis for the execution of power even in the potent absence of the observer.

Foucault argues that the social fabric within which particularly Western society is organized is thoroughly embedded in such hidden disciplinary techniques (Clegg, 1994b; Dandeker, 1990). Central to Foucault's argument is that idea that the capacity for surveillance is built into the physical *form* of the institution, and that the disciplinarity inherent in surveillance techniques permeates the ensuing discourse of power practices. Power for Foucault rests in a network of interconnected relations:

*These disciplinary practices ... are knowledge constituted not just in texts but in definite institutional and organizational practices, they are 'discursive practices': knowledge reproduced through practices made possible by the framing assumptions of that knowledge. The knowledge is very practical: it disciplines the body, regulates the mind and orders the emotions in such a way that the ranking, hierarchy and stratification that follow are not just blind reproduction of a transcendent order, as in Feudalism. It produces a new basis for order in the productive worth of individuals as they get defined by these new disciplinary practices of power. Clegg (1994b:157)*

Foucault's point is that it is in discourses that powers become constituted. Clegg (1994b) develops this point by making clear the link between the Nietzschean 'will to power' which rests in one extraordinary person, and the 'will to power' vested in the 'gaze' of the panopticon of the earlier example. Foucault (1980:93) elaborates as follows:

*In a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse ... we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.*

In this notion of the productive nature of power, lies a potential contradiction. This contradiction arises out of the question of the possibility for resistance within this systematic network of relations of power. Foucault (1979:85) claimed that the capacity for individuals to resist is an implicit and integral aspect of the disciplinary mode of domination. Foucault was of the view that resistance was not possible without some notion of discipline, that, in effect, they are mutually constitutive (Burrell, 1988:228).<sup>20</sup>

Foucault's conceptualization of power and resistance practices inherent in surveillance techniques has fueled much debate and is regarded by many as highly flawed (e.g. discussions in Newton, 1998; Knights & Verdubakis, 1994) Giddens' (1984:153) discussion of the problem is illustrative of some of the critique. Giddens highlights, and is highly critical of, Foucault's suggestion that these techniques of surveillance and consequent discipline characterize other organizations such as schools and workplaces. The point is used to make an important claim about human capacities for agency. Giddens observes that individuals who attend schools or are employed in the workplace are "capable" human agents ... likely to submit to discipline only for parts of the day – usually as a trade-off for rewards that derive from being freed at other times' (1994:154). In other words, the disciplinary capacities of techniques of surveillance are not all-determining. Giddens further develops this discussion of the limitations of discipline in organizations and draws on Goffmanesque ideas on total institutions as a counterpoint

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<sup>20</sup> The discussion will return to the problematic issue of resistance, to pose questions as to the forms and possible consequences of resistance. Foucault acknowledged this but then had little to say about resistance, and a great deal to say about power.



(e.g. Goffman, 1961). As Giddens points out, Goffman's analysis of asylums and prisons differs from, and is useful in the critique of Foucault's concept of disciplinary surveillance in a number of important ways. For Goffman, entry into incarcerating institutions is different from the freedom of movement individuals have when entering other organizations. Giddens (1984:155) expresses this succinctly:

*Total institutions 'impose a totalizing discipline on those who are placed within them. "Adjustment" to these circumstances implies, and usually directly leads to, a process of degradation of self, by which the inmate is stripped of tokens of self identity at the same time as the ordinary components of autonomy of action are heavily constricted (Giddens, 1984:155).*

While other organizations may impose discipline on the time, movement and action of its members at times, and in some measure, they do not do so all the time, nor with total effect.

Leaving these important criticisms aside for the moment, it is worth noting that Foucault further developed the ideas on transformation through manipulation first articulated in *Discipline and Punish*, in his later work on bio-power (e.g. Foucault, 1979). In this work, Foucault explores the techniques used during the nineteenth century to analyze and specify human sexuality in order to achieve control over different sectors of the population. Foucault delineates an emerging set of discourses about sexuality, out of which particular social actions and expectations emerged and prevailed as a means through which communities and social groups could be controlled. Out of the process of analyzing and organizing thought and knowledge about the body, and its behavioural manifestations, emerged efforts to normalize behaviours according to the dominant discourse about the body. This was the era of the emergent professions of anatomy, medicine, and teaching, whose representatives were all focused upon the regulation and management of the physical and mental aspects of society.

## **Conclusion**

The choice of Weber and Foucault does not imply that the series of alternative perspectives on power are of no relevance to this research. However, the power-related perspectives of Weber and Foucault, which have been highly influential in organization studies generally, are of particular relevance in studying the police in a number of ways. As later discussions will show, the police organization has been imbued with Weberian ideas of rationality and the pursuit of legitimacy through bureaucracy since its inception in the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, as later chapters will illustrate, assumptions about rationality still inform the police today, and are an integral feature of the recent rise of a 'new managerialism' in the police.

At the same time, the power-related ideas of Foucault are also important in the present study, particularly with regard to a relational approach to power, rather than an episodic conception. His interrogation of the forms that knowledge took, in institutions, and in the construction of ideas about the self, and the body, also provide indications of avenues of enquiry in this present study of power and its expression in cultures, practices, and subjectivities. The issue of the capacity for individuals to resist disciplinary techniques of surveillance in organizations that arises in the context of Foucault's work is also an important theme that will be developed in ensuing analyses.

However, having established some of the ways in which both Weber and Foucault might contribute to the present analysis of power, Chapter 3 will turn first to criticisms leveled at both scholars and will present a consideration of some of the crucial themes of this thesis.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Critical themes**

Having established the significance of both Weber and Foucault to the present study, this chapter will introduce critiques of their respective power-related contributions, and will outline some of the ensuing central themes that will inform this thesis. The critiques of Weber and Foucault presented in the first two sections below will be drawn largely from the works of feminist scholars, while not ignoring criticisms from other quarters. Feminist critiques are valuable precisely because they insist on highlighting the ongoing nature of power asymmetries, and the ways in which those work against women in the workplace.

This chapter presents themes critical in both senses of the word: it will outline feminist (and other) critiques of both Weber and Foucault, and it will also delineate the power-related themes identified in recent theoretical and empirical studies of organizations that are considered important in the present study. Themes raised here about the problematic place of women, and of notions of inequality, in the work of Weber and Foucault are mirrored in the problematic place of women in the police organization and in the much of the police literature, as will become apparent in later chapters.

The first two sections of this chapter will outline important critiques of Weber and Foucault respectively. On the basis of themes that emerge from these critiques the chapter will consider a range of critical themes that are of direct relevance to the remainder of this thesis. To that end, discussion will turn in the third section to a consideration of power and management practices, and will review some of pertinent organizational theory literature in this regard. The chapter will then outline the specific relevance of the often inter-related themes of power, subjectivity, identity management, and gender in the study

of power in organizations in general, and for the empirical analysis of power in the police organization that will follow in later chapters.

### **Critiques of Max Weber**

Over the years a number of important criticisms have been made about the limitations of Weber's bureaucratic ideal type, and observers have commented upon the extent to which the rationalizing force of the 'iron cage' was not as all encompassing as Weber had both predicted and feared. David Morgan (1996) provides a useful summary of these critiques. He organizes the key criticisms into five themes. 1) The use of ideal type, while not accepted entirely, became an often-used starting point (much as in the present work) for studies of organizations. He cites Etzioni's (1975) observation that Weber's ideal type analyses appeared to work for some organizations and not for others. 2) Rather than the rigidity implied in the rational bureaucratic model, scholars identified dynamic processes, according to which bureaucracies were 'subject to the influence of change generated internally and externally (e.g. Selznick, 1966). 3) In addition, dysfunctions within bureaucracy were identified, which belied the apparent efficiency claims of the bureaucratic ideal type (e.g. Merton, 1949). 4) Blau (1963) introduced into the debate an insistence on a more processual model, in which rules were not fixed, but were modified and negotiated, contrary to the bureaucratic ideal type. 5) Finally, Morgan identifies metaphysical critiques of Weber's rationalizing 'iron cage', which highlight that different contexts might lead to more, or less, bureaucracy. In other words, bureaucracy in practice was far from inevitable. Further highlighting the limitations of bureaucracy in practice, Merton (1957) focused on the problematic notion of *bureaucratic impersonality*. He was critical of associated assumptions about the potential to eliminate personalized relationships, the informal, and the non-rational, which he regarded as unlikely and unsustainable.

Morgan (1996) reiterates these critiques of Weberian ideas for a particular purpose: to consider the extent to which ideas about rationality and bureaucracy are reflective of, and shaped by largely unacknowledged assumptions about masculinity. Firstly, he does this by highlighting the extent to which management has acquired status and importance in organizations alongside the ongoing debate about efficiency and bureaucracy. He then proceeds to link management with men, and with assumptions about masculinity. He makes these links in order to argue that rationality and bureaucratic processes are imbued with masculinist assumptions, and vice versa.

Morgan's work cited here is a good example of a growing body of research that insists on examining the extent to which gender remains a largely taken for granted, and unacknowledged contributing factor in shaping power hierarchies and practices in organizations, and is of direct relevance in this regard to the present study. His particular approach (see also Collinson & Hearn, 1994<sup>1</sup>; Hearn, 1992) is explicit in its aim to complement the already established feminist applications (e.g. Kanter, 1977) and critiques (e.g. Bologh, 1990; Ferguson, 1984) of rationality and bureaucracy, to which the discussion will now turn.

Kanter's early study *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977) is an excellent example of a Weberian analysis of organizational practices employed with feminist intent. Kanter's study of the structural marginalization of women in organizations was effective in introducing gender into discussions of power in organizations, and in placing gender at the centre of debate, rather than on the margins. At the end of a fairly detailed, and at the time groundbreaking analysis of the practices that maintain and reinforce the structural marginality of women in organizations, Kanter presents solutions in terms of increasing

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<sup>1</sup> Collinson & Hearn (1996) highlight the extent to which organizational power tends to reside in the managerial function, and further contend that management is imbued with the assumptions of highly masculine discourse. Elsewhere these same authors argue that the continued dominance of men in management positions results in interconnections between managerial practices and different notions of masculinities (e.g. Collinson & Hearn, 1994).

the absolute and relative numbers of women throughout organizations. In so doing, Kanter's feminism is critical of structural imbalances, but does not go so far as to criticize the notions of structure *per se*. Kanter argues against what she sees as Marxist-inspired theories of power as domination. Yet, in her view Weber does not present power as domination. Witz & Savage (1992:17) remark on some of the associated limitations of Kanter's analysis as follows:

*Kanter quite clearly reads Weber in a "de-gendered" way and accepts the core truths of Weber's account of the rationality and goal directedness of bureaucracies ...without unpacking its gendered subtext.*

Ferguson (1984), writing from a position of radical feminism, is far more direct and explicit in her criticism of Weber's account of rationality, and indeed aims to 'unpack its gendered subtext'. Ferguson's is one of the earliest radical feminist rejections of bureaucracy. In her view, bureaucracy is a fundamental and profound threat to those who work within such organizations, as a consequence of the (far reaching) disciplinarity of the 'bureaucratic discourse'. She is highly critical of the male-dominated nature of bureaucratic organizations, and draws parallels between the subordination of some members in organizational hierarchies, and the subordination of women in patriarchal societies. Ferguson's solutions are markedly different from Kanter's, in advocating other, 'characteristically female' ways of organizing as a necessary alternative to bureaucracy. In addition, she offers short term solutions that advocate separatism for women, in order to evolve different organizational forms.

There are those who make an important criticism of Ferguson's critique. Due Billing (1994) criticizes Ferguson for adopting a narrow, one-sided view of bureaucracy, and argues for a more detailed and nuanced analysis of gender and bureaucracies. She is critical of the view that bureaucracies can unilaterally be regarded as products of 'maleness' (Due Billing, 1994:179). Before her, Witz & Savage (1992:19) also argued for

a more 'intertwined' examination of gender relations and bureaucratic hierarchies, an approach supported in the present work. This is not, however, to undermine the importance and influence of Ferguson's original critique.<sup>2</sup>

Organizational theorists Ray & Reed (1994:158) remind us of the many readings of Weber, and the varied criticisms of the limitations and relative importance of different aspects of his work. Weber is, therefore, hardly a novel starting point for a consideration of power in any organizational setting. Ray & Reed put this as follows: 'Why then undertake yet another dissection of the Weberian corpse?', a question that might well be asked of the present work. After all, the limitations of Weber's 'iron cage' have been well debated, as indicated above. However, the themes explored in the introductory chapters to this thesis suggest that a study of power in the police that failed to consider Weber's legacy in this regard would be remiss. This is because many management policies and much of practice in the police organization are still imbued with assumptions about the rationality, efficiency and impersonality of office that can be achieved through bureaucratic technologies. The many attempts to 'manage culture' are imbued with assumptions about the possibility of ordering the everyday practices and rituals of organizational life. So, despite calls by some in the field of organizational theory to look to aspects of Weber's legacy other than rationality and bureaucracy, (e.g. Clegg, 1994b:149)<sup>3</sup> it is appropriate to use these well-rehearsed Weberian ideas as a starting point for a study of power that uses the quasi-militaristic police bureaucracy as its empirical example.

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<sup>2</sup> Others (e.g. Bologh, 1990:ix) have also paid close attention to the 'masculine thinking' of Weber, and his intellectual contemporaries such as Freud. She argues that Weber's concern with the political world reflects a concern with greatness that reflects his assumptions about action and heroism. She presents a feminist criticism of the patriarchal assumptions that inform the (masculine) political community and public world of his time. Bologh, like Kanter and Ferguson, offers solutions. Hers take the form of proposing an alternative vision based on 'sociability' (p. 215) and in which the struggles and challenges of what she calls social life are accorded more influence than action and greatness.

<sup>3</sup> Clegg argues against the continued (over) use of Weberian analysis of organizations 'principally as structure', and seeks to interpret his contribution in terms of cultural studies.

In terms of the present study, the critiques outlined above raise some further important themes. First, they suggest that the extent to which rationality and efficiency are actually achieved in bureaucratic organizations must be questioned, a process which is clearly missing in management practices of the present police organization, and much of the related literature. It is also apparent that the 'neutrality' of the techniques associated with bureaucracy should be interrogated for taken for granted assumptions, amongst which are assumptions about power asymmetries such as gender inequalities. Accordingly, a detailed consideration of the tensions and contradictions that inform, give shape to, and are shaped by the practices of bureaucratic hierarchies is likely to prove fruitful when attempting to explore the conditions, processes and consequences of power in the police, and indeed in any organization.

### **Critiques of Michel Foucault**

In recent times, many critical scholars have turned to the ideas of Foucault for insights into the intricacies and nuances of everyday practices of power. However, Foucault too has attracted strong criticisms, from a range of perspectives including a number of important critiques by feminist scholars. These feminist critiques engage with Foucault's approach to power in a number of important ways. Some criticize Foucault's unsatisfactory engagement with issues of power inequality, and with agency. At the same time however, some feminists regard Foucault's power-related approach as a potentially elucidating challenge to the ideas and assumptions of feminist theory and practice.

Foucault's conceptualization of power in relation to the body in both *Discipline and Punish*, and *The History of Sexuality (Volume 1)*, have been used by feminists to explain certain features of women's oppression. More specifically, his arguments have been used to explain the extent to which women's experience is controlled and limited by culturally imposed and determined ideas about female sexuality, in different historical contexts.



Some of the strongest and most enduring criticisms of Foucault's conceptualization of power and knowledge, also come from feminist quarters. McNay (1992), while acknowledging that Foucault has provided a positive impetus to the furtherance of debates in feminist social theory, is also critical of Foucault for rendering women (and men presumably) passive, and consequently underplaying the importance of agency in his analysis<sup>4</sup>:

*These limitations centre upon the difficulties of assimilating a primarily philosophical form of critique into feminist theory which is rooted in the demands of an emancipatory politics. For the emphasis that Foucault places on the effects of power upon the body results in the reduction of social agents to passive bodies and does not explain how individuals may act in an autonomous fashion. This lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project: to rediscover and re-evaluate the experiences of women (McNay, 1992:3).*

Of additional importance in the context of the present work is McNay's observation that, in spite of Foucault's assertion that power is diffuse and productive, he tends to present power 'as a centralized, monolithic force with an inexorable and repressive grip on its subjects' (McNay, 1992:38). This critique is made outside of feminist circles as well (e.g. recent examples in Campbell, 1998; Newton, 1998). Campbell (1998) regards Foucault as contradictory in this regard, on the one hand claiming that power (and resistance) are productive and multi-directional, existing in all relations at all times. Yet at the same time, following Campbell, Foucault imbues the bourgeoisie with greater power than other groups or individuals. Campbell argues that, for unacknowledged reasons, Foucault accords the bourgeoisie status as influential agents, as separately constituted subjects, status which he denies other groups and individuals. The contradiction arises out of Foucault's tacit alignment with the post-structural philosophical position which insists on

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<sup>4</sup> This critique is reflective of Giddens' (1984) critique of Foucault outlined in Chapter 2.

the de-centered subject, and from his neglect of inequalities generally.<sup>5</sup> Campbell identifies a strong sense in Foucault's work in which it is on behalf of the bourgeoisie that the dominating effects of surveillance take effect (in prisons, and in asylums for example). Yet, Foucault does not accept the idea of the individual as an active agent. The status of the active subject (or otherwise) is important when considering the balance between power, resistance, and compliance in organizational practice, all of which are themes to which the present discussion will return. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that McNay (1992) reflects a wider unease when she notes the problematic status accorded to resistance in the work of Foucault.

Other feminist writers have engaged critically with Foucault's work and legacy in explicitly less theoretical ways than that of McNay, and are critical of the intellectual elitism (and opaqueness) that make much of his writing dense and inaccessible (e.g. Ramazanoglu, 1993). Despite this, and additional strong reservations about Foucault's lack of interest in issues to do with gender (as opposed to sexuality), Ramazanoglu and the contributors to her edited collection, find three arenas in which Foucault's work is elucidating for feminist social theorists. Firstly, his understanding of power relations suggests different ways of understanding power relations between men and women, and with other women. Secondly, his work challenges feminist assumptions about political practices and the project of women's liberation (precisely because he denies the existence of separate, agentic subjects). As Ramazanoglu (1993:8) eloquently puts it:

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter 4 will further explore epistemological and ontological claims and counter-claims about the existence (or otherwise) of subjects, as active agents in the social world, and the last section in this chapter will further establish the related importance of questions about subjectivity and agency in this study.

*Feminism is in danger of being shifted away from an emancipatory global movement, to a philosophical specialism which provides legitimation for political pluralism.*

Thirdly, the contributors seek to challenge the parameters and validity of Foucault's thought from within the arguments and philosophies of the considerable body of (in this case English speaking) feminist thought (Ramazanoglu, 1993:3). In other words, feminist thought and practice directly challenges the political relativism that is a possible consequence of Foucault's ideas.<sup>6</sup>

These critiques are important with regard to the present work in a number of ways. Firstly, in its emphasis on the ways in which gender and power interact, this thesis seeks to distance itself from accusations of political relativism. Secondly, McNay (1992) serves to illustrate that Foucault's approach to the subject is problematic, particularly with regard to his under-theorization of the capacities for individuals to have an impact on the world around them as active agents. Thirdly, the present work is concerned to ask questions about, and seek explanations for, the continuation of specific forms of power inequalities over time. If a historical perspective is taken, as opposed to a genealogical approach (see Burrell, 1988:224), then the present work is of the view that questions should be asked as to why gender inequalities persist over time, and across geographical space. The police organization in this sense is a case in point, but is one amongst many others. These issues of gender, and of persistent power inequalities are themes which Foucault has failed to adequately acknowledge or address.

At the same time, however, Foucault does offer a range of useful concepts through which to explore power in organizations in his advocacy of: a relational approach to power, the importance of power as residing in practices; and the important inter-relationships

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<sup>6</sup> The problem of political relativism outlined here has its roots in Foucault's Nietzschean heritage, as outlined in Chapter 2.

between power, knowledge, discipline, and surveillance techniques. These themes will be further explored and developed in ensuing analyses. The following section will build on the critique of Weber and Foucault developed so far in this chapter, and will consider some of the contributions from organizational theory on power in organizations, with specific regard to management practices in the first instance.

### **Power and management practices**

Critical organizational theory has recently insisted on the value of exploring the assumptions that inform management, and has directed the attention of academics and practitioners towards issues of power and control that underpin the process of management (e.g. Alvesson & Willmott, 1996; Roberts, 1996; Thompson & McHugh, 1990). These and other authors also underline the extent to which management is a *process* embedded in a complex social context, rather than a set of rational tools and technical functions. Explicit or implicit in all of their arguments is an insistence on problematizing and exploring management practices, in terms of underlying assumptions about power and control.<sup>7</sup>

Legge (1998:136), reflecting similar concerns about the assumptions of management, suggests deconstruction analysis as a useful means through which to explore and critique management rhetoric and organizational practice. She defines deconstruction analysis as:

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<sup>7</sup> This is not to suggest that there is neat agreement between all critical theorists on all aspects of management, or on how these might most usefully be critiqued.

*At its simplest, deconstruction may be seen as a mode of discourse or textual analysis that uses reversals, inversions and paradoxes to call into question the orthodox interpretations derived from conventional forms of analysis.*

In advocating deconstruction, Legge's intention is to challenge the certainties, assumptions and presumptions that surround management theory, rhetoric and practice. Such deconstructive methods are employed in a number of studies of power at work in organizations that seek more nuanced analyses of the practices of power. Some of these studies are deconstructive in method, and many incorporate explicitly Foucauldian ideas about power and its intricate relationships with practices of discipline, resistance and of knowledge in their critique of management practices. Knights & Collinson (1987:457), for example, draw a comparison between what they call the 'disciplinary effects of managerial psychology and financial accounting'. Here they draw on the Foucauldian idea that discipline is not some episodic act emanating from authority, but rather an embedded part of 'routine social practices'. A more recent example is that of Hoskins (1998), who explores the relevance of Foucauldian ideas in the study of accounting, and deconstructs associated management practices.

Elsewhere, Clegg (1989b:99) also argues that it is necessary to adopt a relational approach to power, rather than a mechanistic one:

*A concern with the exercise of power from within a given structure of dominancy is not the same thing as a concern with mechanisms of dominance, strategies of power and regimes of control ... part of the problem is the pervasive tendency to think of power as something, rather than as a property of relations.*

Interestingly, Clegg draws on Foucault and Weber in outlining the potential for discipline inherent in practices of surveillance in organizations. He proposes that, while 'disciplinary practice' as a concept is clearly associated with Foucault's ideas on power, it

is also implicit in Weber's work. When Clegg points to the limitations that characterize organizational structures as power mechanisms (like bureaucratic command and control hierarchies) he makes a point pertinent to the present study. No matter how an organization is formally structured, in practice, these structures rarely lead to the enactment of their implicit authority in organizations. Because of the relational nature of power, employees are not wholly controllable. Recalcitrance and resistance are part of the many 'intransitive processes which constitute organizational disciplinary practices in an hierarchical field' (Clegg, 1989b:101). Control in organizations is never total, as outlined in the introductory chapter (e.g. Giddens, 1984; Goffman, 1961), despite the existence of employment contracts. Control can never be ensured, at least in part because of the capacity of individuals to act, to have influence, to be active agents.<sup>8</sup>

In her study of the performance appraisal systems introduced into universities in the United Kingdom, Townley employs a definition of management as a relational process, embodied in people (as opposed to being objective techniques) and operating through people. Accordingly, management as an actively constructed *practice* is emphasized in her work. In deconstructing management, Townley turns to what she calls the 'regulatory mechanisms which make a domain or arena open to regulation' (1993:223). She is critical of orthodox approaches to management for adopting a model of ends-means rationality, in which power is usually conceived of as analogous to authority, as something of a commodity to be held or used. She is critical of this (Weberian) interpretation of power as

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<sup>8</sup> Related arguments have been by scholars not readily recognized as deconstructivist. For example, Hyman (1987:33) argues that despite the growing emphasis on management in Britain, and, in particular, discourses of strategic management, the nature of the employment process is far too complicated and contradictory to allow for rigid determinism and absolute control by management over production processes. In the context of the present work Hyman's analysis is important in highlighting the complexities that shape the 'nature, dynamics and preconditions of management strategy'. It is interesting that the rise in status of managerialism over the last few decades in the police has taken place in the context of an increase in managerial emphasis in the broader British political economy. Hyman observes that 'management', along with other distinctive terms like 'employers', 'capital', and 'capitalism' are not interchangeable concepts or categories. He emphasizes that each refers to a distinctive analytical framework, and importantly, that each reflects markedly different perspectives on 'the familiar "actor-versus-structure" controversy' (Hyman, 1987:27). His argument is useful in insisting on un-picking the claims and inconsistencies of management, and highlighting that there are many contradictions that give shape to and limit the rationalization potential of 'management'.

a zero-sum commodity, to be used *over* other groups, individuals or structures, in which some have power, and some do not. She draws on Foucault's relational notion of power to inform her understanding of management: power might be positive and creative, embedded in many and varied practices. As such power is expressed in part in the technologies of organizations.

Townley's consideration of appraisals is of added importance in this thesis in the context of later empirical analyses of such management practices in the police, and her analysis of appraisals as a disciplinary technology requires some additional critical comment. Firstly, Townley uses the example of appraising employees' performance at work as an example of a disciplining technology, one which seeks to render the 'arena' of employee performance as both visible and knowable, and therefore open to intervention and measurement. Accordingly, Townley's consideration of management tools and techniques in light of Foucault's conception of the power / knowledge interdependence is an informative contribution. However, while illustrating the potential disciplinarity implicit in such approaches to managerial and organizational systems of administration, Townley does not engage sufficiently with the agentic capacities of employees', to 'resist' in some measure these attempts to impose control, and her approach is overly deterministic as a consequence.

What emerges from the above is the importance of the relational and complex nature of 'management' and related power practices. Power relations at work in organizations construed in this way suggest: 1) the co-existence of multiple, sometimes competing, hierarchies; 2) an appreciation that there are many different 'structures' that contribute to 'structure-action' interactions; 3) and recognizes the latitude for individuals to respond to, interact with, and sometimes resist attempts to control their behaviour and effort within the indeterminacy of employment relationships.

Having established in the foregoing discussion the importance of a relational approach to conceptualizing power, and management practices, in organizations, the next section will take a closer look at the related issues of subjectivity, identity management and gendered hierarchies in organizations, and the particular importance of these themes to the remainder of this thesis.

### **Power, subjectivity, identity, and gender**

A theme that has informed much of the foregoing discussion in this thesis has been the importance of social structures (variously defined) and individual actions in considerations of power. Recently, the complex interactions between structures and actions that inform approaches to power have been explored, and theoretical advances made, in the field of organizational studies. This section will set out some influential studies of power in organizations in this regard. The discussion will seek to show the importance of subjectivity in the analysis of power, and will highlight the related importance of identity (and gender) management in organizations in general, and in this study of the police organization.

Drawing on the ideas of Giddens (1989; 1984; 1976) and Collinson (1992), amongst others, subjectivity is taken in this analysis to reflect the capacity for individuals to be active agents, in some measure, in their dealings with the demands of social structures (variously defined). Incorporating subjectivity into the analysis of power allows both for the recognition of individual agentic capacities, while avoiding and critiquing over-determined analyses in which individuals are regarded as passive objects in the face of structural demands.

Collinson (1992) provides a cogent analysis of the links between subjectivity and notions of identity management that is of particular relevance to the present research. Writing from a post-structural perspective, Collinson (1992) presents an approach in which



identities are multiple, and shift in response to the various demands of social structures, such as work organizations. This notion of multiple, shifting, and insecure identities is based on an ontological assumption of a de-centred the subject, as outlined briefly in earlier discussions. The identity of the subject, conceived of in this way, is made up of a range of ongoing agentic accomplishments. Such a subject is markedly different from the rational Weberian subject outlined previously. The important point with regard to the present discussion is not that individuals are somehow psychologically insecure *per se*, but that identity is made up of a number of aspects which are responsive to the demands of power structures and relations. Accordingly, individuals are agents in the process of identity maintenance, at times actively supporting the status quo in order to safeguard certain aspects of their transient, multiple identities. At all times their actions are serving to recreate and shape the power relations that informed their very actions.

Subjectivity is therefore an analytical concept that provides a means through which to engage critically with some of the ways in which structure(s) and agentic action interact with and shape each other, without ascribing supremacy to determinism (structures) or to voluntarism (action). Furthermore, because it seeks to explore the complex interactions and interrelations between structure and action, considerations of subjectivity in an analysis of power also provide the means through which to explore related practices of resistance (and compliance). At the same time, critical consideration of subjectivity facilitates the critique of theoretical approaches to power, in terms of their epistemological and ontological assumptions, themes which will be explored in greater detail later in this thesis.

For the moment, it is sufficient to establish the analytical importance of subjectivity in the present thesis, and to highlight the related significance of identity management and aspects of gender power asymmetries in this regard. The ensuing discussion in the chapter will elaborate upon the detail of these themes, and the debates they have inspired recently

in organization theory, before turning in Chapter 4 to a more detailed discussion of ontological concepts such as 'the subject'.

A number of recent studies have focused their analysis on the significance of 'identity work' (Thompson & McHugh, 1990:314) in the construction of power relations in organizations. One instructive example is that by Kondo (1990). Her research is based on participant observation in a confectionery factory in Japan, and she considers how workers at the factory constantly craft themselves and symbolic meanings, within the company and the family. She argues that the boundaries of identity are not only constantly contested, but are also constantly shifting. Power inevitably comes into play as interest groups or individuals 'try to force each other into comprehensible categories' (Kondo, 1990:10). Her experiences as an American Japanese woman working in Japan gave her first hand experience of the way in which 'persons seemed to be constituted in and through social relations and obligations to others' (Kondo, 1990:22). Kondo makes the point that there is no word equivalent to the western 'I' in Japanese. Furthermore, there is no defining category for 'woman', other than as expressed through subject positions: mother, wife, part-time worker. In other words, relationally defined notions of self are inextricable from context. While power structures, such as family, school and the church may differ between cultures, the potential impact of these, amongst others, on crafting identities is of profound significance. Gendered power structures are particularly defined and influential in Japan, and Kondo's study therefore illustrates the extent to which gender and identity concerns can be interrelated.

Connell (1987) uses the examples of the relationship between a secretary and her executive boss to illustrate the way in which relations at work are informed by the power relations at large in society. The relationship is informed by differences in income, the labour market vulnerability of the secretary, and the overall social power and authority of men. The secretary in this stereotypic example, is generally called upon to conform to a

particular model of femininity 'in which technical competence and the social presentation of attractiveness, social skill and interpersonal compliance are fused' (Connell, 1987:180).

The organization culture within which identities are being constructed is an equally powerful source of indications as to what is acceptable and what is not seen as appropriate behaviour in workers. Albeit informed by the dominant power structures of race, class, gender and age, the particular cultures within a single organization are an important source of identity work. As Gareth Morgan (1986) suggests, there are many ways of understanding the cultures that prevail in different organizations. What they each reflect is the way in which work and workers are both controlled through broadly shared norms and values. For example, the self-discipline and commitment espoused by human relations management is a particular form of control that intrudes on the way workers behave and understand their roles and identity in the organization.

The implication here is not that workers blindly obey the disciplines imposed upon them through power structures such as appraisal schemes, or team work, for example. However, the values that are overtly or covertly being 'sold' to employees about the organization and its mission, will inevitably inform the extent and type of identity management engaged in by individuals and groups. Equally in strong cultures and in weak (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), the signals about values provide workers with fuel for identity concerns, about fitting in, or not fitting in, about resisting and/or about complying, sometimes with more and sometimes with less intensity. Collinson (1992:31) suggests that 'within the power inequalities of organizations, identity is constantly open and available to be negotiated and re-negotiated, defined and redefined'.

The important analytical point to make here is that formal and informal cultural practices place many demands on the identities of employees. Changes to work practices, or

attempts to manage aspects of culture might render some sources of symbolic and material identity in jeopardy, and may exacerbate employee's defensive orientations as a consequence. The close relationship between power and identity is illustrated here: as (structural) demands are made on aspects of identity, the individual exerts some measure of resistance (or indeed compliance) in the face of those demands. This expression of agency (action) illustrates that the worker is not a passive object. Yet at the same time, the organization does not have unlimited capacity to direct the resistant or compliant actions of the individual.

Individuals' concerns with managing identity in the face of organizational demands might reflect a range of practices associated with material and symbolic security, their incomes and their status. Furthermore, status can be informed variously by gender, position within the hierarchy or relative to other players at the time, in terms of inter-personal influence, age, race, or any number of variables important in a meritocratic society. Individuals are thus agents in the process of identity maintenance, at times actively supporting the status quo in order to safeguard certain aspects of their transient, multiple identities. At all times their actions are serving to recreate and shape the power relations that informed their very actions.

Collinson, Knights & Collinson (1990:199) approach agency by elaborating upon the 'inherently dual nature of self ... [through which human beings] experience themselves as both active subjects and passive objects of self and others' 'evaluations'. Attempts aimed at securing an objective, unambiguous identity, are thwarted by the reality of at least two judges/audiences at any one time, self and others. Not only is it impossible to secure a fixed, objective identity from a subjective point of view, it is similarly impossible to dictate what others think, or to become merely the object of the subjective self (Collinson, 1992). 'Others', as it were, cannot be reduced to the status of static, uncreative objects.

The masculine shop-floor counter culture explored by Collinson (1992), provided workers with the space to feel in control of their own identities and work, yet at the same time served to trap them in subordinate roles within the organization. The discourse of masculinity in which they defined themselves, and their work, allowed them to see themselves as 'free' from the bureaucratic and 'effeminate' world of office work. The reality remains however that, as manual workers, they are a group without much power, despite being part of the male power group in society.

The way in which resistance is expressed in the workplace is varied and often extremely subtle. The masculine counter-culture on the Slav's shop floor in the Collinson study (1992) is an example of the ways in which identity informed responses to the attempts at introducing a culture of familiarity after the company was bought by American interests. Kondo's (1992) Japanese study highlights the manner in which the processes of group formation were used to foster particular identities by the trainers at the ethics centre to which employees were sent for a week of experiential learning. However, despite the apparent uniformity of the groups by the end of the week, Kondo cautions that this should not disguise the continued resistance by participants to corporate attempts to control their identities. This might take varied forms, from lateness, to tardiness, passive resistance through 'go slows', or spending that extra ten minutes at the coffee machine.

In insisting on bringing the subjective experiences of shopfloor workers into accounts of power and control in the workplace, Collinson's study highlights a number of influential and interrelated practices that are of importance when considering how to research power in organizations. Firstly, Collinson stresses the significance of oppositional practices in which shopfloor workers engage in response to management initiatives. These practices are diverse, ranging along a continuum, with consent on one extreme, to collusion, conformity, and resistance at the other extreme. Secondly, Collinson highlights the extent to which such practices might have contradictory effects and unintended consequences

(Giddens, 1984). Thirdly, of importance in framing the present study, Collinson argues that oppositional practices should be considered in terms of their impact on organizational relations, and the consequences for the individuals and groups concerned. In sum, Collinson's empirically grounded argument suggests that an uncritical approach to management ignores the impact employees have on the management process and on their work environment.

Empirical studies of 'identity work' such as those of Kondo and Collinson<sup>9</sup> are reflective of the Foucauldian insight that power and subjectivity are both conditions and consequences of the other. Others consider the power / subjectivity relationship more theoretically. For example, Knights & Willmott (1989) present highly theorized, non-empirical explorations of power and subjectivity at work. They draw explicitly on Foucault in order to affirm 'the relevance of a concept of the subject' (1989:554) in sociological studies, and in developments in industrial sociology. Their intent in this early work is to overcome a number of so-called 'dualisms' in sociologies of modern society, such as that between the individual (action) and society (structure). They advocate Foucauldian ideas in the quest to overcome such dualisms, emphasizing the 'practical transformation of social relations' (1989:536). They criticize industrial sociology, and intellectual strands within it (such as Marx-inspired Labour Process debates) for denying the *ambiguity* of human agency, and the ongoing social construction of identity. They argue that workers might choose to identify with, preserve, or challenge different aspects of identity, or organizational practices which enhance or reinforce those. Subjectivity is something conceptually different from 'the subject', in that it reflects the extent to which the individual is incorporated in and reflective of the relations of social production. Referring to a 'subject', in their view, would reflect a dichotomous understanding of the

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<sup>9</sup> The analysis of shopfloor culture is more directly informed by Giddens's (1976) conceptualization of structuration theory than it is by Foucauldian ideas. However, both of these critical scholars present a view on power as simultaneously constraining and productive, and it is this insistence on the relational nature of power practices that is important in the context of framing the present study.

individual as separate from society. Knights and Willmott argue for the incorporation of subjectivity in analyses of social relations, and do so by concentrating on the relationship between power and subjectivity.

The significance and interpretation of subjectivity in organizational analysis, remains highly contested, and has given rise to ongoing debates (e.g. Newton, 1998; Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995). Newton questions the claims for non-essentialism and non-dualism made in the name of Foucault by the likes of Knights & Willmott, Collinson, and Townley, as outlined in some detail above, and in Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, & Walkerdine (1984). He acknowledges that these authors might not align themselves with all of Foucault's work [for example, citing Willmott's (1994) criticism of Foucault's refusal to spell out what 'Foucauldian emancipation' might mean]. In Newton's view, Foucauldian studies have not adequately theorized 'material' relations. In other words, structure remains insufficiently explained. He also suggests that the fragility of self has been overemphasized in studies of identity and subjectivity, and goes further to contend that the emphasis on identity might be a misreading of Foucault's work.

Others, like Thompson & Ackroyd (1995), have accused Foucauldian studies of largely denying the capacity of workplace resistance and recalcitrance. They are highly critical of the totalizing concept of the disciplinary 'gaze', and decry the lack of accounts of resistance. In their view, over concern with identity in the workplace has removed 'labour' concerns from analyses. Newton (1998) is more moderate in his critique of Foucauldian studies in this regard, and in turn criticizes Thompson & Ackroyd for over-emphasizing certain strands of Foucauldian thought, in particular, those that are informed heavily by notions of the panopticon.

The present analysis seeks to extend these debates about power, and the related and often problematic issues of agency, identity, and resistance practices. It will do so in light of the

foregoing exposition and critique of the power perspectives of Weber and Foucault, and the associated debate in organizational studies that has been illustrated in this chapter. However, in concluding this phase of the analysis, it is necessary to note that consideration of resistance in organizations is not limited to more recent critical organizational studies, nor to feminist critiques. Concepts of an 'emancipatory project' are reflected in Marx's concern with the exploitation of the working class by those who owned the means of production. Emancipation and resistance in the workplace have been presented by Marxists (such as Braverman, 1974) in terms of class. Concerns with emancipation and liberatory politics have led others (psychologists) to seek for their discipline a 'model of liberation and individual freedom' (Henriques, *et al.* 1984:3). Knights & Willmott (1989) find a place for emancipatory concerns in the (Foucauldian) notion that power relations might be productive, as well as constraining. Giddens (1976) offers a similarly 'productive' case in structuration theory, in which individuals are seen to impact upon and give some shape to the (multiple) structures that give shape to their existence. The theme of the emancipatory project will be returned to in the concluding chapter more directly, in light of the present study of theories and practices of power.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter and the earlier theoretical discussions have sought to show that a relational approach to the study of power in organizations is likely to be fruitful in terms of pushing the current body of theory forward in some measure, and in terms of exploring the implications of practices of power in the police. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to explore the multiple, and sometimes competing and contradictory practices that inform power in organizations. At the same time, it is sympathetic to critiques that ask questions about the continuity of certain expressions of power asymmetries over time. The study therefore adopts a deconstructive methodological approach, in order to expose the everyday practices and discourses present in the organization to detailed scrutiny, and to expose



and explore assumptions about such practices. The ensuing analysis will draw on the power-related approaches of Weber and Foucault, in light of the foregoing critiques, and seeks to contribute to the debate about their respective strengths and weaknesses. Later chapters will explore the ways in which Weberian notions of hierarchy and bureaucracy operate in the police organization, and will also seek to explore the limits and constraints of Foucauldian ideas about power/knowledge, discipline, and surveillance. At the same time, the analysis will engage critically with the contentious issue of resistance in the workplace, as a key concept in exploring the boundaries of different theoretical perspectives on power.

Before placing the police organization in some context in Chapters 5 and 6, the discussion that ensues will first consider the importance of epistemology in shaping the way in which research questions are posed and pursued, and will locate the epistemological assumptions of the present work. Indeed, this chapter has already indicated that the way in which 'the subject' is construed and understood is important in shaping theories and critical studies of power. A closer consideration of the associated epistemological (and ontological) assumptions is therefore essential.

## Chapter 4

### Knowledge claims, theory, and choices

Lewis Carroll allowed Alice to step through the looking glass into Looking Glass House. There she found familiar objects to be strange and different: pictures alive next to fireplaces, clocks bearing smiling faces, and chess pieces that moved. What had seemed stable and predictable to Alice now appeared to be changing and mobile, and her expectations were reversed (Carroll, 1970). In a similar way, Chalmers (1982:xix) suggests that close consideration of philosophies of the sciences often renders once-familiar concepts intangible and unfamiliar, even confusing. A systematic consideration of a number of influential philosophical orientations to the sciences is, however, a necessary step in this study of power.

Having explored, in the previous two chapters, different theoretical conceptualizations of power, and some of the associated strengths and weaknesses, this chapter is concerned with epistemology and the related question of methodology. The chapter develops the foregoing theoretical discussion in a number of important ways. Firstly, the discussion describes in some detail the development of epistemology, or 'knowledge claims', since the eighteenth century Enlightenment, and so builds on earlier discussions of the assumptions that informed the power-related work of both Weber and Foucault. Secondly, the discussion highlights the extent to which distinctive institutional forms are reflective of modern assumptions about rationality. Consequently, the chapter serves as a bridge between the earlier exploration of Weber's 'iron cage of bureaucracy', and the discussion in the next chapter of the rise of the quasi-militaristic, bureaucratic structure of the police organization. The form adopted for the police organization at its inception

reflects assumptions about rationality and calculability that characterize Enlightenment thought, and the so-called 'project of modernity'. Thirdly, the discussion explores the limits and assumptions that inform modern and post-modern perspectives. This detailed discussion serves the important purpose of critiquing positivist assumptions about knowledge and research, and it also explores the knowledge-related claims made in the name of the 'post-modern'. These two orientations are informed by different and often competing views about the nature of the subject, the author, texts, knowledge, reality, and truth, as touched upon in the previous two theoretical chapters.

As will become clear in the ensuing discussions, modernism and post-modernism are wide-ranging concepts. This chapter will outline some of that breadth, and will explore the epistemological underpinnings of these approaches and the associated implications for research methodology. In conclusion, the chapter will locate the epistemological position of the present research, before turning in Chapter 5 to a detailed exploration of the police organization.

### **Acknowledging philosophy**

All research is necessarily informed by a philosophical orientation to science, method, and society. Whether implicit or directly acknowledged, all forms of research and theorizing about physical and social phenomena are underpinned by values and beliefs about knowledge, and about ontology. The latter refers to views on the broad parameters of existence and being, and is particularly associated with concerns as to whether reality exists only in the context of the individual, or whether it exists in some way independent and external to the individual (Davies, 1996). In addition, a set of epistemological assumptions is found at the heart of the philosophical foundations of research. These are concerns regarding the assumptions about the grounds of knowledge, the assumptions that underpin forms of knowledge, and the communication of that knowledge (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

Following Rosenau (1992), epistemological assumptions are concerned with the validity, limits, and nature of what we know, how we know, and how we produce knowledge. In other words, all methodological choices and interpretive decisions are informed and constrained by a view, or set of views, on how information and knowledge might best be obtained, and within what limits that knowledge will be assessed, evaluated and outcomes disseminated. Accordingly, epistemology is of concern as much to the 'hard' sciences as it is to the 'softer' social sciences.

Indeed, some of the continuities between Weber and Foucault are epistemological, or put more simply, are about meaning. While each focused on significantly different explicit themes, and had formative roots in different disciplines, their interests do have a number of connections. Perhaps this is most clearly expressed in their mutual interest in the existence, development, ontological status, and effects of various forms of rationality in Western culture over time (Smart, 1985). In addition, both have a heritage that is informed to some extent by continental philosophical epistemology as outlined in this chapter, and with associated concerns about meaning, and multiplicity in meaning, and values (e.g. Clegg, 1994b)

Long-standing debates between proponents of modernism and post-modernism reflect the on-going significance of the epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin all research. It is to these debates that this discussion will now turn, in sequence, in order to highlight a number of important competing claims between these epistemological and ontological positions.

### **Modernity, modernism, and knowledge claims**

Debates about the nature of modernity, modernism, and as will be illustrated in the following section, post-modernity and post-modernism, encompass a broad range of themes. These range from 1) the cultural, in terms of popular culture forms such as art

and architecture; incorporate 2) the philosophical, drawing on the legacy of the Enlightenment period; and include 3) the institutional, referring to more substantive social and economic institutions, such as the forms of organized capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the continuities, differences and contemporaneity that might be found across these three broad approaches to modernism, it is useful to consider each in sequence as a means through which to explore the diverse components of the 'era'.

### *Cultural expressions*

Debates in which modernism and modernity feature draw on a range of ideas and disciplines in their attempt to codify and define exactly what is meant by these terms. 'Modernism', for example, as a distinct artistic movement and aesthetic idea has a precise meaning and time frame, through the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. In this context, the movement is strongly associated with the Avant Garde and Dadaism of the 1920s (Callinicos, 1989). Modernism is also associated with an architectural emphasis on ideals of clean, well ordered urban environments. The grand building schemes that followed the Second World War, often characterized by large blocks of high rise flats, are also a good example of the type of development associated with modern architecture (Smart, 1993).

### *Philosophical origins*

Such practical expressions of the era aside, for the purposes of this analysis, it is particularly useful to consider the philosophical roots of modernism. These lie in the ideas of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, in which reason was accorded the highest standing of all human capacities and attributes. Following Russell:

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<sup>1</sup> Dandeker (1990) while making a different point, provides a good example of institutional forms associated with modernity. He directly links an increase in bureaucratic surveillance with specifically modern institutions, like the state military, and the police. Harvey (1990) pays attention to the continued 'institution' of capitalist accumulation.

*... the period of history which is commonly called "modern" has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways. Of these, two are the most important: the diminishing authority of the Church, and the increasing authority of science (1961:479).*

The 'modern mental outlook' was shaped significantly by Kant's suggestion (Cooper & Burrell, 1988) that reason involves the capacity to think independently. Powers previously vested in such external authorities as God, the Church, and mystical sources were replaced by the acceptance of the superior power of the human capacity to invoke and impose reason.

A key belief of the 'project of modernity' was in the capacity for humans to use rationality in the pursuit and achievement of perfection for humanity. Rationality therefore had an underlying emancipatory capacity, towards which effort and endeavour could be focussed, within a shared set of beliefs and values. These beliefs were based upon a view that the human condition would improve over time as a consequence of rational endeavour. This progressive view of history was shaped by the belief that it was possible for humans to liberate themselves from ignorance and irrationality. Rosenau (1992) cites a list of modern priorities in which the emphasis on this competent rational subject is clear. These priorities include individual responsibility, bureaucracy, humanism, tolerance, neutral procedures, impersonal rules and rationality.

The increasing influence of science and scientific method were an important means through which the Enlightenment attack on religious beliefs was made. Following Cooper (1996:703):

*... it is in the practices of the natural sciences that the goals of European Enlightenment – the overcoming of superstition, of obfuscating religion, of metaphysical waffle – are to be realized, thereby heralding the intellectual maturity of human beings to establish objective knowledge ... of the universe, themselves included; and it is the acquisition of such knowledge through the methods, both deductive and empirical, which are epitomized in the natural sciences that there resides the goal of human reason, or even of human existence itself.*

The following section will focus on the influence of the emphasis on reason in shaping social institutions, before moving on to a more detailed discussion of the rise of science during this era.

### ***Institutional forms***

Cooper & Burrell (1988:95) draw a clear distinction between two versions of modernism. *Critical modernism*,<sup>2</sup> (emphasis original) they suggest, follows the lines of Kant's Enlightenment programme of rational discrimination, described above. The second version, they argue, is presented through developments of the ideas of Comte and Saint-Simon, in the form of *systemic modernism*. Drawing on the ideas of Bell (1974), the authors present the latter as an instrumental application of reason to problems of government, administration and planning within industrializing societies, which leads to the quest for common, unified sets of knowledge and principles.

The organizational forms that arise within systemic modernism in effect hinder the freedom of the rational subject, the latter being overwhelmed by the needs of the society

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<sup>2</sup> Cooper & Burrell (1988:97) draw on Habermas (1972) in this regard. Habermas argued that the capacity for 'communicative rationality' of language has been subverted by the 'discourse of systemic reason'. Habermas (1984) also argued that 'truth' could only be measured in terms of a consensus on values and beliefs which would be reached in 'ideal speech conditions', unhindered by the distortions of factors such as the 'discourse of systemic reason'. For the purposes of the current discussion, it is sufficient to note these contributions in light of the emphasis on how discourses of reason might shape, and be shaped by particular forms of social structure.

to organize and order social relations.<sup>3</sup> The implicit contradiction between these two versions of modernism is that in the event of systemic modernism, the rational agent is necessarily constrained from acting on the impulse of their reason, because of the administrative systems that have evolved out of the very capacity for rationality. This is precisely what Weber talked about when he referred to the apparent technical superiority of bureaucracy, as outlined in Chapter 2. However, common to both expressions of modern rationality is a firm belief in a world that *can* be understood and approached on the basis of rational thought. Subjects are believed to be able to reflect upon an external order, using a discourse that ‘mirrors the reason and order already “out there” in the world’ (Cooper & Burrell, 1988:97). In other words, individuals are believed to exist, and the world external to those subjects is seen to be recognizable, tangible, and ordered. The modern emphasis is on a unified set of beliefs grounded in the rational as a way forward, a means through which the physical and social world can be rendered understandable by the reasoning subject.

This emphasis on rational thought and institutional form finds expression in some of the ideas of Marx. Lash and Urry (1987) highlight the links between modernity and capitalist development, whereby the need to generate surplus value requires an ever expanding economic order to ensure profit for those in control of the means of production. Within this economic expansion, according to Marx, lie the seeds of discontent and a socialist revolution, through which the means of production might be claimed for and by the working class. This particular strand of Marxism provides an example of the progressive emancipatory aspect of the Enlightenment legacy, incorporating as it does the potential for humans to liberate themselves through concerted political action based on knowledge,

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<sup>3</sup> That the police organization in England took on a militaristic bureaucratic form in the early nineteenth century is a reflection of the influence of Enlightenment assumptions about rationality on institutional forms. Chapter 5 will explore the specifically bureaucratic development of the English police organization in some detail.



through which 'false consciousness' could be eradicated<sup>4</sup>. The liberation of the autonomous subject as represented in Marxist historical materialism provides an example of a practical grand narrative of emancipation that is said by some (e.g. Lyotard, 1984) to typify an important feature of philosophical modernism, and at the same time, illustrates the modern emphasis on the rational subject. While the examples of cultural and institutional 'forms' of modernism highlight the diversity of views in these debates, it is, however, for the purposes of the present work, the underlying philosophical heritage of modernism that provides the most direct challenges, and it is to the knowledge claims made in the name of science that this discussion now returns.

### *Scientific method*

As mentioned earlier, one key feature of the influence of the philosophy of the Enlightenment was the emergence of the modern sciences in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Russell, 1961). One of the quests of that modern science was to pursue overarching explanations for physical phenomena. Accordingly, as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, Francis Bacon had argued that the aim of science was to improve the position of humans on earth (Chalmers, 1982). Bacon proposed that this should be achieved through theorizing based upon the organized collection and observation of facts. The emphasis on the empirical production of 'scientific' knowledge flourished in the prevailing climate of rationality. In terms of epistemology, such a modern view of science accepts that knowledge is built up through a sequence of hypothesis generation, testing, and counterhypothesis. Ontologically speaking, positivist science of this persuasion accepts that an external reality exists, that it can in some way be measured, and that such measurements reveal some form of truth (Rosenau, 1992:

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<sup>4</sup> The point being made here is about the aims of a meta-theory such as this, rather than about the practical constraints and functionalist limitations of the theory.

109).<sup>5</sup> From this truth it should be possible to claim causality, and to predict with some degree of confidence the likelihood of future occurrences of the event in question and how related systems will behave.

It is important to note that, despite this emphasis on evidence and observation, modernism *also* allows for the claims of 'grand theories' such as Einstein's theory of relativity (Chalmers, 1982). While not necessarily provable, special relativity is an expression squarely within the ambit of the modernist pursuit of over-arching, all encompassing explanations of the human habitat and condition, the proof of which might be found in the future.

Both the natural sciences and the social sciences aim to function in terms of hypothesis and counterhypothesis, the 'softer' sciences having adopted the constraints and assumptions of the physical sciences in pursuit of explanation and understanding (Hollis, 1996). Indeed much research is intent on discovering and describing an external reality, in the pursuit of which great emphasis is placed on causality and prediction as meaningful extensions of the process of observation and measurement. By adopting the positivist assumptions about proof and replicability, social sciences have placed certain limits on the research problems which may be tackled, and the way in which they are approached. To that end attempts are made to render the researchers as impartial and detached as possible from the research in the pursuit of objective knowledge. As a result particular emphasis is placed on methodologies of research, through which rules and regulations are applied and presented. In the social sciences, researchers often use large scale questionnaires and structured interviews in order to impose some of the rigours of positivist methodology on their research. The questionnaires and interview schedules are

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<sup>5</sup> Realism, following Burrell & Morgan (1979:4), postulates that the social world 'exists independently of an individual's appreciation of it', and exists whether or not an individual is aware of it. In ontological opposition to the claims of realism are those made under the rubric of nominalism. Here the assumption is that the social world 'external to individual cognition' is made up only of concepts and labels.

constructed according to methodological rules and regulations in order to limit, and in some cases even to deny the impact of the researcher on the data, and often to enhance claims about the generalizability of findings.

Within the modernist model of knowledge and research, the assumption is made that the values, prejudices and emotions of the researcher should be set aside. Although it is acknowledged that researchers might not be able to achieve impartiality, detachment or objectivity, they are encouraged at the very least to identify how their own values might have informed the study, in the hope that this might preserve some measure of objectivity (Rosenau, 1992). Fundamental to this approach to knowledge and research is an acceptance of the assumption that a reality external to the individuals concerned does exist, and can be measured.

While acknowledging Popper's (1959) powerful critique of the grand claims of proof behind positivism through the introduction of the more modest 'falsification'<sup>6</sup> agenda, Rosenau (1992) usefully suggests that this only made for less firm claims to explanation and causality. She insists that the general approach to knowledge production remained largely intact, despite Popper's influence, albeit in a more sophisticated form. The underlying principle remained: that concepts continue to be defined in real terms using measured values. Following the 'falsification' agenda, representation of objective reality is still regarded as possible and useful, just as it remains desirable to make clear judgments as to which evidence and interpretations<sup>7</sup> are more valid than others.

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<sup>6</sup> This was Popper's response to the problems of inductive reasoning. Disagreeing with the suggestion that scientists start with observations and then infer theory, Popper proposed that scientists set out on the basis of conjecture. Observations could then be compared with the initial conjecture. If the observations prove the predictions wrong, then the theory has been 'falsified' (Papineau, 1996:290).

<sup>7</sup> Interpretation in a modernist social science is limited to that which can be justified in terms of the specific observed data (Rosenau, 1992). Any interpretation is valid, as long as it is not contradicted by the argument of another interpretation based on the same data.

In this way, modern philosophy continues to place the thinking subject at the centre of social analysis, an entity separate from objective, external reality. These are themes that will recur and be developed in the following discussion of the post-modern, to which the discussion now turns.

### **Post-modernity, post-modernism and knowledge claims**

The term post-modernity is controversial, and evokes strong reactions from a broad range of intellectual disciplines. The detailed claims made in the name of post-modernism are diverse, and often in competition with one another. Of great significance for the social sciences is the challenge posed by post-modernism to the underlying assumptions that underpin social research and analysis. The challenge is clear: post-modernism denies the epistemological, ontological, and methodological claims made in the name of modern science. The hostility is not aimed at science itself, but at some of the claims made in the name of science about knowledge, reality and truth; these claims are variously referred to as positivism or scientism (Cooper, 1996:703). This section will first consider the earliest philosophical influences on what has become the post-modern debate, before considering the terms of the debate as to what constitutes the post-modern. The final sub-section will explore the more influential emphases and approaches adopted under the banner of post-modernism.

#### ***Origins of post-modern thought***

Following Cooper (1996), the criticisms of positivism which emanated largely on the European Continent during the twentieth century, can be described in terms of three main themes: 1) a critique of the cultural and moral impact of positivism; 2) the accusation that the claims upon which positivism rests are based on an incorrect understanding of the conditions and nature of scientific enquiry; and 3) crucially, that positivism presupposes a notion of a rational self, or coherent subject, for whom it is possible to achieve objective knowledge about reality.

The roots of these three broad criticisms of positivism are attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche. The core of his critique is grounded in a particular view of meaning which he explored through a discussion of the metaphorical nature of linguistic categories. His approach to meaning, which has proved highly formative in the development of post-modern critique, is based on the argument that all words are metaphors. Cooper (1996:707) uses the example of nouns to illustrate the point:

*Nouns ... do not refer to classes of objects which, in nature, are the same; rather, they determine our determination to impose an order upon the chaotic flux of "the world of becoming", by forcing dissimilar words into manageable categories. Hence our statements are not representations of how reality actually is; instead our alleged "truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that this is what they are – metaphors that have become worn out" [citing Nietzsche] and are no longer recognized as metaphors. [emphases original]*

Based on this argument, Nietzsche rejected the notion of a rational self as presented in the work of Descartes. Nietzsche argues that the self that exists for the duration of a person's life is a 'fiction' informed by the tendency to attach an entity to what is only a linguistic category, in this instance, the pronoun 'I'. The moral implication of this line of thought suggests that a person cannot be exactly the same person as one who committed a crime some time in the past (Cooper, 1996). In other words, the notion of an 'individual subject' is conceived of as socially constructed, the product of different discourses over time (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn & Walkerdine, 1984). This approach to meaning leads to the additional observation that scientific positivism is also based upon an illusion of linguistic categorization that, with use and over time, has gained the status of 'truth' and 'representation'.

The claim that facts do not exist, only perspectives, is Nietzsche's crucial contribution to the critique of modern philosophy. He argued that all scientific enquiry is informed by the

context in which it was carried out, and by the perspectives of those involved. Heidegger (1962), drawing on this critique of scientific culture, extended the argument to suggest that all science is able to offer are secondary, derived accounts of the world. He argued that objects and things are viewed in everyday circumstances as part of a whole context. On the other hand, scientists, by removing their objects of study from the contexts in which they gain some of their meaning (in Cooper, 1996:710), are left with only a partial object, devoid of any relational meanings derived from its context. In this way, the object is divorced from the role it might play in its original community, and in effect becomes a different object. A useful example of such an object is that of a river, which in its historical context has enormous significance in the lives of local communities. Once extracted from that context, it can easily be viewed as a resource to be used as appropriate to technological needs developing elsewhere. Following Heidegger's argument, the river is transformed into an objectified source of energy, stripped of any of the meanings it had when considered in relation to its historical context. Hence positivism *tries* to separate subject and object (researcher / researched), and objects from their context (a river / community, culture and historical context). It is therefore argued that scientific culture in its emphasis on objective knowledge destroys pre-existing cultural meanings.

Heidegger's critique, drawing as it does on Nietzsche's influence is but one example of a trend in which the objectivity claims of positivism are brought into question. Out of these critiques would develop the post-modern debate.<sup>8</sup> The terms of that debate are fiercely contested, and the discussion in the next sub-section will focus on some of the different arguments put forward.

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<sup>8</sup> Cooper (1996) further explores the critique of scientific culture offered by the Frankfurt School (e.g. Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979), phenomenologists (e.g. Husserl, 1965), and from the existential school of philosophy, which criticizes the attempts of the natural sciences to treat human beings as observable objects exhibiting explicable behaviour (Sartre, 1957). It is beyond the necessary scope of this chapter to do justice to all such developments that are linked with Nietzsche's initial contributions as outlined above.

### *Defining terms*

It is necessary to consider briefly the confusion and contradictions that exist in the usage of the terms 'post-modernity' and 'post-modernism'. There is widespread disagreement as to whether 'post-modernity' is, at one extreme, an era separate and distinct from that of modernity, or at the other end of the spectrum, whether 'it' is merely a continuation and part of modernity (e.g. Callinicos, 1989). Giddens has argued in different contexts that as a distinct era, post-modernity is yet to come (Giddens, 1990), and elsewhere proposes 'post-traditionalism' in preference to 'post-modernism' as a conceptual framework for understanding changing traditions and alterations to the accepted ways of organizing social activity (Giddens, 1994). He also talks about 'late modernity'. Smart (1993), drawing on Huyssen (1984), usefully suggests that post-modernism may be the appropriate term to use when considering the shifts in *discourse, sensibilities and practices* to which many writers of the 'postmodernist "turn"' (Reed, 1997:23) refer. On the other hand, postmodernity, Smart argues, is a term more broadly deployed, to refer to an emergent 'different historical condition' (1993:16), which stands apart and distinct from the 'condition' of modernity.

Smart (1993) further draws on Huyssen's (1984) argument to illustrate three contrasting views of the 'trajectory' of post-modernity. First in line is Featherstone's (1988) proposal that post-modernism is merely a cultural configuration that exists in broad continuity with modernism, and at the same time as modernism. Featherstone goes so far as to suggest that many of the features associated with modernism have been incorporated in various definitions of post-modernism. Here he lists the preference for montage and simultaneity over structured and sequential narratives, curiosity about the ambiguities and uncertainties of reality, and the uncertain and fragmented nature of the human subject, about which more will be said later. Callinicos (1989) takes a similar line when arguing that the novelty of post-modern art forms merely repeats that of art forms claimed by modernism.

Secondly, Huyssen draws on Jameson (1984) who argues that post-modernism reflects an era distinct from forms of modernism. Jameson suggests a distinct periodization between realism, modernism, and post-modernism, to which Smart links Mandel's (1980) three stages of development in capitalism: market, monopoly, and multi-national forms<sup>9</sup>. Jameson is arguing the case that post-modernism represents a new and unique era.

A third approach usefully characterizes post-modernism as 'relational', a 'way of describing a broad range of aesthetic, literary, and cultural responses to modernism' (Smart, 1993:18). Viewed in this way, the etymology of post-modernism must inevitably be considered in the context of its relation to modernism. In other words, post-modernism can only be approached in terms of its linkages with modernism. It can be said that Featherstone's argument as outlined above is, in its emphasis on continuity, also an expression of this relational conceptualization of post-modernism. In this context, Smart links Nietzsche with the beginnings of a relational post-modernism, acknowledging his work as the first of a 'long-standing series of engagements with modernism' (Smart, 1993:18).

### ***Post-modern method***

Having considered some of the origins of post-modernism, and attempted to situate some of the competing terminology, it is useful to develop a more detailed discussion of some of the emphases, tools and techniques that are associated with a 'post-modern turn'. Earlier, brief reference was made to the post-modern challenge of global views, or 'grand narratives'. The latter catchphrase, attributed to the work of Lyotard (1984) epitomizes the challenge to any view that has global claims, or attempts to be all-encompassing. As Rosenau puts it:

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<sup>9</sup> Mandel's distinction can be said to be between institutional forms of the post-modern 'era', as described in terms of modernist institutional forms.



*[Post-modernism] challenges global, all-encompassing world views, be they political, religious, or social. It reduces Marxism, Christianity, Fascism, Stalinism, capitalism, liberal democracy, secular humanism, feminism, Islam, and modern science to the same order, and dismisses them as logocentric<sup>10</sup>, transcendental totalizing meta-narratives that anticipate all questions and provide predetermined answers (1992:6).[punctuation in original]*

In this way, the post-modern often aims to highlight and explore details of the local, the diffuse, the playful (Smart, 1993). The suggestion in approaches of this nature is that the local provides the only context in which relative 'truths' have any 'meaning', while meta-narratives have none.

Another of the emphases of post-modernism is that it would be epistemologically and ontologically unacceptable merely to replace the assumptions of modernism with more over-arching assumptions. In particular, post-modern approaches place much emphasis on discourses, and more specifically, on discourses of difference (Cooper & Burrell, 1988), seeking to 'locate' (Rosenau, 1992:8) rather than 'prove' meaning. Such analyses of discourse do not limit themselves to spoken or written words, but include practices and contexts of expression. Post-modernism, in this general sense, favours the tentative and exploratory, over findings and end results, indeterminacy over determinism and conclusion. The fragmented, the non-rational, and the non-essential are valued over the concrete, the rational, and the quintessential. The latter are discarded as impossible because they are seen to be based upon a flawed belief in the existence of truth and the neutrality of language and rational thought.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Logocentric implies a transcendental essence of meaning, a belief system in which truth and meaning emanate from a spiritual source.

<sup>11</sup> Describing post-modern emphases (rather than method) highlights one unavoidable contradiction: that post-modernists are also inevitably involved in prescriptive methods. In this sense post-modernism might be accused of being the ultimate 'grand narrative', and thereby stand accused of being intolerant, silencing dissenting voices. As will be discussed later, Knights (1997:16) acknowledges this contradiction, but proceeds nonetheless to demand the 'complete eradication' of dissenting voices.

The work of Derrida (1981)<sup>12</sup> is seminal in introducing deconstruction<sup>13</sup> to the debate, and it is perhaps one of the most often used and quoted themes of post-modernism. The emphasis of deconstruction is on 'undoing', in order to expose the extent to which constructs, concepts, and knowledge claims are steeped in the values and assumptions of the formative context. Indeed, the single purpose of any deconstructive approach is to expose the process of construction (Cooper & Burrell, 1988:99), and thereby to introduce doubt about the apparent neutrality of knowledge claims. The intent is to render visible that which is often invisible, and to render explicit that which is often left unsaid.

In spite of the emphasis on deconstruction, some proponents of post-modern 'method' also advocate interpretation. In this sense post-modern interpretation is self-consciously subjective. In Rosenau's view (1992), this emphasis on interpretation has a more positive and 'constructive' purpose than deconstruction, and is often informed by the ideas of hermeneutics<sup>14</sup>. Interpretation is applied when a post-modernist is looking for a way of 'saying', in addition to exposing or 'undoing'. In order to take into account the variety of views adopted with regard to the emphases of post-modernism, Rosenau (1992) makes a case for two loose groupings of approach. It is useful to sketch this categorization, as a means through which the competing claims can be organized for the purposes of this discussion. Rosenau distinguishes between the *sceptical* post-modernists at one end of a continuum, and *affirmative* post-modernists at the other.<sup>15</sup> The sceptics' work is characterized by distrust, uncertainty, disillusionment, fragmentation and moral

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<sup>12</sup> The influence of Nietzsche's contributions on meaning on Derrida is apparent in the latter's focus on the constructed nature of language and meaning.

<sup>13</sup> Disagreement exists amongst post-modernists as to whether deconstruction is a method, or an anti-method. Rosenau (1992:118) suggests that deconstruction is 'as close to method as post-modernism comes'.

<sup>14</sup> The hermeneutic emphasis is on the relationship between an utterance or expression, and the place / context of that expression. Rosenau (1992:5) argues that hermeneutics is part of the modernist tradition, albeit less vulnerable to many of the criticisms outlined in this section. Bauman (1978) considers the implications of hermeneutics for the social sciences in some detail.

<sup>15</sup> Smart (1993:20) also draws a distinction between a tolerant affirmative post-modernism, and a critical post-modernism which is intent on deconstructing both modernism and the status quo.

vagueness. At the other end of the spectrum the *affirmative* post-modernists are also engaged in a critique of modernism, but adopt a more positive outlook of the 'age'. Rosenau locates this group largely on the North American continent, although in citing examples of this orientation she generally refers to aspects of New Age influences, and lifestyles. The sceptics are located more firmly, in her view, in Europe, and it is here that she makes the link with the 'dark side' (1992:15) of the intellectual heritage of Nietzsche.<sup>16</sup> Whether or not these particular categorizations apply neatly to any or all proponents of post-modernism, Rosenau is highlighting a crucial tension within post-modern debates, in terms of the respective visions (or lack thereof) for the human condition. The extreme versions of post-modernism have attracted much controversy, being accused of nihilism, encouraging relativity, and facilitating a moral vacuum. Perhaps because of the political and moral associations, many authors and thinkers eschew the post-modern label. A well-known example is that of Michel Foucault, who on many occasions declined the post-modern mantle, despite being cited in the developing debates as a contributor to post-modern thought. Smart (1993, preface) highlights this point in Foucault's own words:

*What are we calling post-modernity? ... I must say that I have trouble answering this ... because I've never clearly understood what was meant ... by the word "modernity".*

Whilst it is clear is that there is much disagreement as to the appropriate use and meaning of the terms 'post-modernism', and 'post-modernity', the underlying epistemological critique of the claims of modern knowledge continues to challenge complacency in the conduct of research and dissemination of findings. That challenge is focused upon a number of key themes, which will be elaborated upon below.

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<sup>16</sup> This 'dark side' refers to oppressive potential of the so-called superman, who is part autocrat and dictator. At the same time, the 'dark side' refers to the potential for political relativism: one set of actions never being judged as worse than another, only relatively different.

In summarizing some of the 'coherent' themes of the post-modern challenge, Rosenau (1992) highlights the trend towards reduced status for the author of any text, and an enhanced capacity for the reader to interpret and reinvent the text at will. 'Text' in this context may be the written word, or any form of communication. Of additional concern to post-modernists are concepts of history, and of the interpretations and understandings placed upon constructs of space and time. The entire span of history may be viewed as no more significant than the events of yesterday, specifically to limit the capacity of written history to claim significance and truth.

Post-modern themes of the subject, truth, and representation are particularly pertinent to the present discussion. Accordingly, each will be considered in some detail. Of particular importance is the extent to which the most sceptical of post-modernists disallow for the existence of a coherent, uniform subject. Once again the influence of Nietzsche is apparent. What is criticized here is the idea that a subject can be a consistent reference point, against which events and the external world can be judged. The critique of the 'subject' has developed in opposition to Comte's idea that human beings are the basic elements in the explanation of historical and social processes' (Cooper, 1996:715). Part of the critique of the 'central subject' takes the form of an attack on the humanism that informs western concepts of the self, whereby human beings are believed to be the source from which meaning emanates (Rosenau, 1992:47). For the post-modern critic, the naive claims of humanism on behalf of the autonomous subject, are linked with the false claims of positivism outlined earlier:

*... since they regard "humanism" [emphasis original] as the basis for Enlightenment optimism about the emergence of rational, autonomous persons with the capacity to delineate the objective order of things, then the errors of "humanism" are also those of "scientism" (Cooper, 1996:716).*

Here, humanism, like scientism, is accused of being both logocentric and attempting meta-narrative. Humanism is being criticized for '... seeking to provide answers based only on its own unquestioned, internally validated, fixed form of reference' (Rosenau, 1992:47). It is clear from this critique that the status of the subject is dependent upon a view of the existence or absence of objective reality. There are, however, those amongst the affirmative post-modernists who call for a return of the subject, albeit with emphasis on those excluded or rendered marginal in dominant discourses, or, as in the work of Kristeva (1986), who argues that the process of psychoanalysis is about the constitution of a 'subject in progress'. Rosenau also cites Giddens' (1984) efforts to decentre the subject, without eradicating it completely, in his articulation of the mutually constitutive relationship between agency and structure.

Of particular importance in the context of the present discussion, is the post-modern critique of truth and knowledge, whereby claims of knowledge can only be presented as relative *truths*, dependent upon the communities and language conventions within which they are constructed. The influence of Nietzsche's concept of meaning described earlier, is clear.

Rosenau (1992) usefully points out the contradiction that arises for the more and less radical proponents of post-modernism in this context. Sceptical post-modernists would argue that the abandonment of truth claims casts doubt on the very process of constructing theories. No one theory is more valid than another. This sceptical post-modern orientation might attract accusations of philosophical relativism. An affirmative approach to post-modernism would argue instead for tentative, humble theorizing,

through which no absolute truths are claimed, but which does allow, at most, for an 'unsystematic, decentered' (Rosenau, 1992:22) theory.

Post-modernists are also particularly concerned with questions of representation. With this in mind, Rosenau (1992:92) argues that most post-modernists are 'anti-representational', on the grounds of their belief that it is not possible to represent any event, person, place or time without in some way diminishing, and changing the 'object' being represented. Concerns about reality have long informed debates about the relative impact and capacities of human action on the one hand, and structural determinants on the other (e.g. Reed, 1997; Archer, 1995; Collinson, 1992; Giddens, 1979; Bhaskar, 1978). Following Reed (1997:18):

*The "agency/structure debate" refuses to lie down or quietly fade into obscurity. It raises fundamental questions about the nature of social reality, the manner in which it is conceptualized and the theoretical means most appropriate in explaining the relationship between its constituent elements.*

These concerns are reflected in a recent special issue of *Organization Studies*, in which the on-going disagreements about the relative importance of the action and structure 'dualism' are considered. Drawing on Benhabib (1992), Knights (1997:1) argues that the field of organization studies is facing the 'demise of an episteme of representation'. Writing from a position of extreme post-modern scepticism, Knights criticizes any attempts to reconcile the tensions in 'dualistic models' such as those found in the literature on structure and action (e.g. Collinson, 1992; Giddens, 1979).

Drawing on an ontology in which an independent reality is disallowed, Knights argues that the social sciences are merely borrowing the mechanisms for representing the 'real world' from the hard sciences, thereby colluding in the process of privileging certain

types of knowledge. He draws on Derrida to emphasize the extent to which non-dominant narrative forms are displaced and neutralized by dominant forms of knowledge.

Derrida is seen to contribute to the argument against the possibility of representation through his work on binary opposites. In this context, Cooper & Burrell (1988:98) offer the term 'global village' as a useful example of Derrida's notion of difference; the term suggesting simultaneously both the enlargement of the community of discourse and the reduction in its size. 'Difference' is contained in the self-reference of the term. Derrida would claim that the use of opposites within a single term suggests a paradox that is not resolvable: it is not possible to reduce the meaning of 'global village' into a non-self-referential equivalent. The argument suggests that '...at the very centre of discourse, therefore, the human agent is faced with a condition of irreducible indeterminacy' (Cooper & Burrell, 1988:98).

The extremity of such an approach to the themes embedded in post-modern critique is apparent in the following:

*Recently, the absurdity of hierarchical or present/absent dichotomies within dualistic thinking has been recognized, but instead of dismantling the dualistic edifice, attempts have been made to reconcile the terms of the polarity by generating some kind of balance between them [e.g. (Collinson, 1992; Reed ... [1997]). Deconstruction theory, however, does not simply mean an overturning or reversal of the hierarchy of dualistic categories or a reconciling of the presence/absence dichotomy, but their **complete eradication** [emphasis not in the original]. (Knights, 1997:16).*

This is a powerful example of the extent to which sceptical post-modernists are intolerant of any attempts to explain the world that do not ascribe to an ontology which questions the possibility of 'reality'. Following Rosenau (1992:22), 'skeptical post-modernists argue that representation is epistemologically, methodologically, and substantively

fraudulent' (1992:22), because the unique and idiosyncratic can never be represented. It follows from this that any and all interpretations are of equal value, and that none can be more accurate than another because representation is not possible. All that is achievable is an exploration of that which is to be found in the ambivalences and contradictions of a text. The determination not to reconstruct the deconstructed text is part of a commitment to encourage multiple interpretations and responses (Rosenau, 1992:121). Nothing can be accepted, given an elevated status in terms of meaning, nor can any interpretation be rejected.

The interpretive relativism has attracted strong criticism from recent authors who would defend the legitimacy of dualistic examinations of concepts like action and structure (e.g. Reed, 1997; Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995). Reed presents a defense of dualisms based upon the critical realism of Bhaskar (e.g. 1978), in which a categorical distinction is made between social structure and human action (Reed, 1997:30).<sup>17</sup> For the purposes of the current exposition, it is sufficient to acknowledge the underlying centrality of ontological assumptions to the claims of post-modernism.

The preceding discussion has illustrated in particular the extent to which ontological concerns unite a diverse range of arguments presented in the name of post-modernism. Rosenau (1992) warns that the writings of post-modern authors must be taken particularly seriously, despite the apparent gentleness of much of the associated language. As

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<sup>17</sup> Post-structuralists have usefully contributed to debates about power, and the relationship between structure and action. Influenced by the linguistic work of Saussure (1974), post-structuralists have a concern with language, and its relation to power. While Saussure's (structuralist) approach to language located 'signification' to be defined by the shared conventions as understood in shared-speech communities, post-structuralists like Derrida (1981) insist that there are no fixed signs or signifiers in language. As Clegg (1989a:151) puts it: 'Through language our sense of ourselves as distinct subjectivities is constituted. Subjectivity is constituted through a myriad of what post-structuralists term "discursive practices": practices of talk, text, writing, cognition, argumentation, and representation generally.' Post-structuralist concerns suggest that meanings are never final or complete, and identities are consequently shifting sites of struggle. Post-structuralist studies regard identity as a process; constantly produced and reproduced, relational, and non-intrinsic. This approach has informed a number of critical organizational studies (e.g. Kondo, 1990; Collinson, 1992). Critics of post-structuralism warn of the danger of relapsing into



illustrated earlier, post-modernists are not merely employing different terminology, but, as regards epistemological and ontological assumptions, they can be direct adversaries to more traditional, modernist social science.

Foregoing discussions in this chapter have explored the development of modern and post-modern thought, and have set out a critique of associated positivist research methods. In conclusion, the chapter will briefly locate the approach that informed the present research.

## **Conclusion**

The considerations of modernism and post-modernism presented in this chapter might attract criticism for being overly binary. Differences and discontinuities may appear to have been stressed at the expense of continuities. In consequence, the presentation of 'two sides' of the debate in this way may reproduce and reinforce a sense of discontinuity, where there might be greater overlap.<sup>18</sup> Yet, in order to wade through the array of contributing features to debates about modernism and post-modernism, this apparent simplification is a necessary organizational device.

As such, the present work is unavoidably a 'modern' exercise in its attempt to impose order on a range of complex theoretical ideas (and organizational practices in chapters that follow). In this sense, Weber's work too might be described as being infused with the modern intent of imposing the order of reason on an often disparate range of themes. Yet, as outlined in Chapter 2, both Weber and Foucault were inclined to emphasize multiplicities and complexity, as a consequence of their shared Nietzschean heritage, and

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epistemological relativism, harking back to the earlier discussion of the 'dark side' of Nietzschean thought.

<sup>18</sup> Harvey (1990:vii) for example, acknowledges what he calls a 'sea change in cultural as well as in political economic practices since around 1972'. Yet, he concludes that these are superficial shifts, which mask deeper continuity in the basic rules of capitalist production and accumulation.

the present research seeks to emulate that emphasis on multiplicity in its exploration of power. While Weber and Foucault might each have had radically different ideas on the subject (Weber's reasoning subject is quite distinct from Foucault's insistence on the de-centering of the subject), their work suggests (albeit in different ways) that an exploration of power should take into account the forms of social institutions, and the ways in which structures of those institutions influence social relations within them, and in some instances, vice versa. As Chapter 3 has established, the present research is critical of overly rationalized interpretations of the subject. In its focus on the ways structures and individual actions are mutually constituting, the present work also de-centres the subject, and regards subjectivity as an active and ongoing process of achievement.

Despite adopting deconstructive methods, this thesis might also be 'accused' of being a highly modern exercise, in its insistence power as an explanatory 'meta-narrative'. It might well be asked whether this merely represents the pursuit of 'grand unifying theory' of practices in the police organization. These contradictions might be best tolerated if the serious consequences of some of the power practices in the police organization are born in mind, sexual harassment, gender and race discrimination being three instructive examples. The present work does not therefore, seek a grand unifying theory for its own sake. Instead, its aim is to explore some of the practices that are shaped at least in part by power concerns. In effect, the 'meta-narrative' will be complemented by a 'micro-narrative' in the later detail of the data analysis. The argument acknowledges that the form and structures of the police organization show continuity over time, as will be illustrated in the following chapters, with practices and myths being 'passed down' the generations of police officers, and knowledge about what the organization is and does. In this insistence on context and continuity, the work is not post-modern. Perhaps most importantly, the author adopts the view some practices should indeed be judged 'worse' than others, and does not subscribe to the potential political relativism often associated with post-modern work. Yet, the present research is explicitly deconstructive in intent,

and looks closely at the multiple and often contradictory discourses and practices in the police organization that inform and shape power practices. In deconstructing the taken-for-granted practices and discourses of power in the police, it might be possible to better explain some of the ongoing practices labeled 'inequality', 'intransigence', 'culture', or indeed, 'management' in the police.

Having engaged critically in this chapter with the principles underpinning different claims about knowledge and research, the next chapter will introduce the police as an instructive empirical example through which to explore theories and practices of power.

## Chapter 5

### The police organization

The previous three chapters have delineated the claims and limitations of different theoretical perspectives on power, and have emphasized the philosophical orientations that underpin these theories. The ensuing analysis will turn to the police organization as a challenging example through which to explore some of the strengths and weaknesses of these different conceptualizations of power. This chapter will illustrate the extent to which the police organization is imbued with Weberian assumptions about power, while the empirical analyses in ensuing chapters will also explore and critique Foucauldian notions of power/knowledge, discipline, and surveillance in more detail.

Accordingly, this chapter first outlines the development of the police organization over time. This historical overview serves to illustrate the influence that Enlightenment assumptions about rationality have had on the formation of the police. Legitimacy of police authority has long been pursued by means of the imposition of bureaucratic principles and structures. The ensuing discussion will illustrate the extent to which related Weberian assumptions about the technical superiority of bureaucracy have influenced the development of the police. The apparently impersonal, often uniformed, officer is perhaps an example *par excellence* of the (Weberian) assumptions about ‘impersonality’ (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980:76) that underpin the quasi-militaristic bureaucratic organization of the police. This chapter will describe the ways in which this, and other Weberian notions of bureaucratic rationality have consistently informed the development of the police organization.

Accordingly, this chapter will outline the historical context in which the police organization developed. It will detail competing historiographic approaches to explaining the role of police in society, so as to explain and emphasize the contentious role of the police, and related concerns with how they should be organized and held accountable. The discussion will highlight the conflict that has long informed problems of police accountability, and will describe the ongoing pursuit of *legitimacy* for police authority. The chapter will then discuss the escalating controversy over legitimacy, accountability, and the role of the police, since the 1950s. The discussion will conclude by exploring the impetus for more recent concerns with *management* of the police, as a prelude to analysis in Chapter 6 of the related problems of police culture, management practices, and the place of women in the police organization.

### **Origins in conflict**

It is fair to describe the notional presence of the police in contemporary England as ubiquitous. Newspapers provide copious coverage of their activities in the communities they police, and also within the confines of the station.<sup>1</sup> The public appetite for televised coverage of actual and dramatized tales of police officers in action seems insatiable, and the bobby is a commonplace, if sometimes controversial, feature of the high street and the countryside. Parties across the political spectrum variously adopt or discard the law and order mantle, and Parliament daily attends to the passage of legislation to govern and guide police behaviour and duties. This plethora of interest is a reflection of the complex and contentious role of the contemporary police organization in England and Wales. It also highlights the extent to which the police have come to form an integral part of the

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in one edition of the *Guardian* (26 June 1998), two separate articles appeared. One was a lengthy discussion of police accountability (p. 19), and the other alleged abuse by police officers of 'vulnerable women' (p.6). The articles reflect some of the range of interest and controversy persistently associated with the police.

organization and control of our society, and the varied activities that constitute police work.

Some of that complexity has its origins in the historical conditions of police formation.<sup>2</sup> If the present police organization is to be explored and better understood, it is informative to look first to its origins. Underpinning histories of the police are concerns with problems of what policing is for, in whose interests it is performed, how the police are organized, and in what light they are viewed. For example, there is considerable disagreement about the meaning of *police*. Bittner (1970) suggests that 'police' can best be defined as the potential for legitimate use of coercion. The definition is criticized by Sheptycki (1998) as too essentialist and narrow, focusing as it does on only one aspect of police duties, ignoring the widely documented range of mundane duties that make up much of police work, and police involvement in domestic violence, working with victims of crimes, amongst many other duties (e.g. Stanko, 1995; Young, 1991; Graef, 1989; Smith & Gray, 1983). Instead, Sheptycki defines policing in broader terms, suggesting it be understood by means of a genealogy of police (1998:488), which has arisen over time into a form of government and nation statehood based upon the rule of law. Here he illustrates the important interconnections between the state, government, law, order and policing. Emsley (1991:1) also points to the fusion of the state, police, and conceptions of social order in his definition of the English police as: 'the bureaucratic and hierarchical bodies employed by the state to maintain order and detect and prevent crime'. The latter definition is particularly useful in that it draws attention to the bureaucratic form of the organization, and the purpose of policing.

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<sup>2</sup> Emsley (1991:3) traces the etymology of the word *police* to the Greek *politeia*, meaning 'all matters affecting the survival and well-being of the state'. In addition he notes that the Latin word *polis* was developed by the Romans to denote 'the state'. The words *la police* and *die Polizey* were being used in continental Europe by the early eighteenth century. In similar vein, Sheptycki (1998:487) argues that the 'concept of police' was first introduced into English in the first part of the eighteenth century, and gradually 'refined' during that century.

Even the written histories of policing in this country are contentious and often contradictory. Reiner (1992) provides a synthesis of two broad categories of police historiography. It is useful to consider briefly the emphasis of each, so as to construct a picture of the formation of the police service as we know it today. Reiner draws a distinction between what he calls 'the cop-sided view of history' (1992:12) and, with gentle levity, 'the lop-sided view of history' (1992:25). He follows Emsley's (1991) lead in questioning the assumptions of both traditions, each of which explains not only the rise of the policing institution in different terms, but also the purpose of the police as agents of social control. Broadly speaking, a traditional view incorporates a conservative set of assumptions. Reiner summarizes this approach to police history as follows:

*The police were seen as an inevitable and unequivocally beneficent institution, a cornerstone of national pride, which had developed by English pragmatic genius as a response to fearsome threats to social order and civilized existence. There was initial opposition to the police, but it arose from vested interest, malevolence or blinkered obscurantism, and was rapidly dissipated when the benefits of the benign police institution became apparent to all. (Reiner, 1992:12)*

From the above it is clear that the approach generally regards the police institution as a positive entity. Traditional historians ascribe the advent of the new police to the combined pressures of urban growth and industrial revolution (e.g. Reith, 1948). Their argument is new social order problems emerged as existing mechanisms of social control failed to cope, and that the apparently inevitable and appropriate response was the formation of the police as we have come to know it. Emsley (1991:229) is highly critical of this view, and although he sees the police established after 1829 as a new departure for policing, he also sees continuity with the system of watchmen in existence prior to the

formalization of the police. What *was* new, in his view, was their accountability to the Home Secretary, and their new role as an ‘instrument of government’ (1991:229).<sup>3</sup>

The revisionist view became clearly articulated during the 1970s, and was informed by structural materialist concerns with class domination. Within this framework (e.g. Bunyan, 1977), the police were viewed as one amongst many tools through which the dominance of the ruling class could be maintained, at the expense of the working class majority of the population. Following this revisionist view, more formalized policing arose as a response to the crime and disorder that resulted directly from capitalist industrialization (Reiner, 1992:25). Emsley (1991:5) usefully proposes a more synthesized view than either of the strands presented above. He conceives of the police and the law as ‘multi-faceted institutions used by English-men [sic] of all classes to oppose each other, to co-operate with, and to gain concessions from, each other’.

Emsley asserts that the English police developed in the way it did as a consequence of the political and cultural environment of the years of their formation.<sup>4</sup> He draws attention to the policing role played by constables as early as the thirteenth century, after which Parish constables and nightwatchmen became more common, followed still later by the wealthier Justices of the Peace. The Justices in time became influential in county level governance, drawn as they were from the ranks of the wealthy gentry. They were later appointed by the Crown, which lent more weight to their influence.

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<sup>3</sup> In a brief comparison with the police in Paris in the nineteenth century, Emsley notes that policing had a longer standing political state function in France, and was rather more centrally organized in Paris. He notes differences in the countryside, where the *gendarmarie* was a military organization, accountable to the Minister of War. This was in marked contrast with the policing arrangements in rural England, in part because of less involvement in wars than France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Emsley, 1991:233).

<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that other models of policing have developed in different parts of the world. Marenin (1996) provides a useful overview of the development of policing in different parts of the world. Different models of policing are largely informed by concerns with the bases for police legitimacy, organizational characteristics, and range of functions carried out by the police. In this overview, Marenin touches upon variants of policing such as: Anglo-American policing, colonial policing, private policing, continental policing, high/low policing distinctions, and state-centred / community-centred policing styles.



Constables and nightwatchmen made their appearance in seventeenth-century London, with responsibilities for patrolling their own neighbourhoods.<sup>5</sup> At that time, little trained county militias run by the landed gentry were used to impose order during times of rioting over food shortages. For a short while only, a standing army was used to quell riots, but they were extremely unpopular. This negative experience of the imposition of social order by a state army was later to be influential in negotiating the eventual shape of a police force in London that would be acceptable to the *populus*.<sup>6</sup>

From the mid eighteenth-century, the rapidly expanding city of London provided the focus for growing concerns with crime, and saw a redefinition of acceptable levels of crime (Emsley, 1991; Reiner, 1992). From these anxieties grew the role of the trading justice, and the thief-takers, who took over the responsibilities of the gentlemen Justices of the Peace. The famed Bow-Street Thief Takers consequently grew into a semi-legitimate, sometimes suspect presence on the streets of London. They were significant precursors to formal policing.

A series of acts were passed during the eighteenth century, incrementally imposing some measure of 'reorganization and improvements' (Emsley, 1991: 19) to the watch system. Uniforms appeared in limited areas, as did the first foot patrols. Pitt the Younger, in government in 1785, proposed to establish a centrally controlled police force for the whole of London in the London and Westminster Bill. In this he proposed that such a force be organized into divisions, with a Chief Constable at the head of each. Although the bill failed, it laid significant foundations for the framing of the policing bill by Sir Robert Peel in 1829. In the interim, the Thames River Police was established by Patrick

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<sup>5</sup> These might be viewed as precursors to the current day Neighbourhood Watch schemes, which have waxed and waned over the years in terms of their priority as part of policing strategy. In recent years such schemes have been a key feature of community policing initiatives (e.g. Bennett, 1994; Bennett, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Both Reiner (1992) and Emsley (1991) note the extent to which the word *police* was regarded with suspicion in England because of concerns about the nature of professional police systems in France, both before the French Revolution, and after, when Napoleon gave the police a mandate to spy and inform on French citizens.

Calquhoun, recognizable as the first police force in England. It was established initially as a private organization, but was later taken over and loosely supervised by the Home Office.

By the early nineteenth century, the word police came to be used more often to 'describe the system for maintaining public order, for preventing theft, and for detecting and apprehending offenders' (Emsley, 1991:21). All this laid the groundwork for the appointment of the then Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel's 1822 select committee on policing. By 1829 the Metropolitan Police were established in London, with accountability to the Home Office, and Peel soon turned his attention to the policing of individual counties.<sup>7</sup> Here he received strong opposition to the idea of a centralized state police controlled from Westminster, but it was not long before the first of the rural police forces were created, with some local autonomy. The first of these provincial constabularies was in Cheshire, established by The Cheshire Police Act of 1829 (Emsley, 1991: 33).<sup>8</sup>

Even the early police were greatly criticized by Londoners for their 'overly military nature' (Emsley, 1991:25), and because citizens were paying for the service of the police. These concerns were prophetic of current debates about the role and accountability of policing today. Given the reluctant acceptance by the English public of policing, it is curious that a discourse of policing-by-consent has developed in the country. Reiner (1992:60) argues that the construction of consent was necessary precisely because of the varied and strong opposition to the idea of a centralized police force in the eighteenth century.

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<sup>7</sup> Fielding (1991) notes that the county forces that emerged had less accountability to the Home Secretary than the London Metropolitan Police.

<sup>8</sup> In the endnote to his book, Emsley (1991:242) notes that most histories of the police assume a Metropolitan centric view of the sequence of events. He suggests this may be because national archives are located in London, while provincial records are dispersed.

## Legitimacy through bureaucracy

In the face of intense opposition to the idea of such a force, and in a climate of strong political conflict and social division, Peel with his consorts Rowan and Maine promoted a 'low-profile, legalistic' (Reiner, 1992:61) police force. At the heart of their legalistic approach was a concern to create legitimacy and acceptance for the police force. The thinking was that, through the rules and regulations of a bureaucratic hierarchy, it would be possible to convince the public that the police were professional, ethical, non-partisan and accountable (e.g. Walker, 1994; also Manning, 1997).<sup>9</sup> Bureaucracy, in conjunction with the procedural detail of the law, were key strands in convincing the public of police accountability and restraint.

Reiner (1992:68) argues that legitimacy was further pursued via the strategic development of an ideology that the police were merely 'citizens in uniform'. This is the origin of the practice that officers be employed within their own local communities, that they enter the organization at the lowest hierarchical level, and then progress through the ranks ostensibly on the basis of merit.<sup>10</sup> By implication, anybody could become a police officer. The ideological corollary to this was that officers were like the general public, reflecting their concerns and values. Legitimacy was further pursued by the distinct policy of minimal force, intended to allay eighteenth century public fears of police oppression. The structure of the new police organization was clearly strategically devised in response to the political and economic climate of the day.

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<sup>9</sup> The recently revised edition of the classic ethnographic text *Police Work* (Manning, 1997) addresses earlier criticisms of lack of historical and structural perspective. He includes in the second edition a chapter on the social, legal and political processes that informed the eventual emergence of the police organization.

<sup>10</sup> The Trenchard Scheme was introduced by Lord Trenchard during the 1930s, while he was Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. A military man himself, he created a system for recruits from military, public school and university backgrounds to enter the police at Inspector level. (e.g. Emsley, 1991; Holdaway, 1980). The Home Office and the Police Federation were against this scheme at the time, and it was brought to an end in the 1950s.

Along similar lines, Fielding (1991) asserts that three fundamental organizational principles arose out of the conditions of formation of the police. He identifies these as: 1) the independence of constabularies; 2) the democratic supervision of constabularies via Home Office accountabilities; and 3) that constabularies should be of local character, staffed by officers with personal accountability.<sup>11</sup> Fielding further notes that with the passing of the 1919 Police Act, central government's role in accountability was made more explicit. Government was granted increased regulatory powers, and the capacity to withhold government funding for policing. At about the same time, the Police Federation was established, in part to stamp out a more radical, fledgling police union.<sup>12</sup> This intervention might be seen as indicative of increasing government control over the police organization.

The police acquired many of the insignia and hierarchical rituals of the military, despite their reliance on public support rather than arms. Jermier & Berkes (1979:2) draw attention to the apparent relationship between policing and the military as follows:

*Most police departments have adopted the quasi-military organization model characterized by rigid rank hierarchy of authority, impersonality, and an authoritarian command structure.*

This citation makes clear the apparent relationship between the police, and the military. This relationship was perhaps entrenched through the influence of Rowan and Maine, the first two Commissioners of the new Metropolitan police in 1929, both of whom had

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<sup>11</sup> That the gradual growth of the police as a force in society took place at a time of accelerating (male) working class incorporation into political structures also contributed to the growing acceptance of the police in society (Reiner, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Fielding (1991) argues that trade unionism in the police was broken with the setting up of the Police Federation, at about the same time. Reiner (1979:152) argues that until the First World War the police had no organized channels for representing grievances, or exercising economic influence. Illicit attempts at forming a trade union were made with the aid of the broader labour movement. The Police Federation as defined in the 1919 Police Act, saw the advent of a tame representation mechanism, thoroughly designed as a control mechanism. There were demands during the mid-1970s for a more powerful and representative police union, and discontent over comparatively low earnings. It was this discontent that led *inter-alia* to the influential review of policing reported by Sir Edmund-Davies (1978). The report led to a significant increase in police salaries.

successful military careers (Young, 1993:30). Walker explicitly describes the new police as adopting a ‘ “military-bureaucratic” method of internal regulation’ (Walker, 1994:34). He describes that bureaucratization as having been achieved by a clearly demarcated division of labour, detailed status hierarchies of ranks, regulated training programmes and career structures, and detailed descriptions of operating procedures.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the quasi-militaristic order of bureaucracy, the use of uniforms, drills, and the internal discipline code emphasize the militaristic association. The association between military and police organizations is further enhanced by their common reliance on the potential to use coercive power (Walker, 1994; Reiner, 1992) over others. They have authority similar to that of the military to impose their, legally defined, will on others.

Emsley (1991:218) disputes the claims of present day politicians and senior police officers that the police have few similarities to the military. He argues that the militaristic legacy which arose out of the need to control the activities of police constables, reflect concerns still crucial today. Throughout the nineteenth and part of the twentieth century, Sergeants and indeed Inspectors would patrol the beats of their underlings, checking up on time schedules by meeting officers at pre-arranged points on the beat. Constables met up with other constables as part of the elaborate control system. Such meetings were all recorded in appropriate note books, for regular scrutiny by senior officers.<sup>14</sup> Reprimands

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<sup>13</sup> It is unlikely that entry level employees in other private or public sector firms would accept the *overt* level of control and discipline to which police officers are routinely exposed. At the same time, there are many organizations in other sectors of industry that use the symbols associated with military discipline in managing their staff. McDonalds is an obvious example (e.g. Ritzer’s 1993 Weberian analysis of the standardization and rationalization in contemporary societies). While the language of organizations like McDonalds may not be military per se, the intent at creating routinization, predictability and control are similar.

<sup>14</sup> Manning (1983:169) notes the extent to which the introduction of new technologies, such as telephones, two-way radios, and computers, have had significant implications for the supervision of officers. Computers in particular provide a source of data for close tracking of activities by senior officers, although it should be noted that this presumes accurate inputting of data. Manning regards these new technologies as mechanisms for internal supervision and discipline, although his discussion is framed in terms of semiotics, rather than a detailed consideration of the disciplinary character of technology.

and punishment followed errant entries, failure to make meeting points, or inattention to detail. It seems the note book became a record, much, it might be argued, in the same vein as a criminal might have an inescapable record. Punishment was influenced by the officer's character and record, and could range from a monetary fine, to reprimand, reduction in rank, transfer to another area, or dismissal.

Emsley (1991:230) remarks that as early as the 1930s, one of the Inspectors of Constabulary argued for the relaxation of the rigid beat system, on the premise that Constables would apprehend more offenders if given more discretion. This marks the beginning of a slow transition from a general reliance on the episodic discipline of the military, towards a slight relaxation of the detailed bureaucratic control mechanisms used to control the activities of police officers.

### **Changing the police**

During the ensuing decades the police gained increasing public acceptance, and by the 1950s had achieved a great degree of 'invisibility as a political issue' (Reiner, 1992:73). It is important, for the purposes of the present study, to consider the acceleration of controversy over the police since then. In the ensuing de-legitimation of the police and increased controversy over their impartiality and methods, lie some of the roots of ongoing calls for change to the police.

At the end of the 1950s, alleged corruption by three Chief Constables led to investigations and eventual disciplinary and even legal proceedings. These events proved to be the first of many disruptions to the negotiated accord between public and police<sup>15</sup>. The 1950s also brought the rebellious youth culture of the beatniks and teddy-boys, who became a focus

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<sup>15</sup> More recently there have well-publicized miscarriages of justice, (for example, the release in 1991 of The Birmingham Six, and in 1989 The Guildford Four) which severely shook public confidence in the due process of the criminal justice procedures. The inquiry into the West-Midlands Serious Crime Squad in the late 1980s called into question their whole use of the rule of law.

for disruption and confrontation. It was a decade that saw a series of race riots in Notting Hill and Nottingham, which were important precursors to ongoing problems of race relations between police and sectors of ethnic minority communities.

From these challenges to the police–public status quo, emerged the Police Act of 1964, in which the government proposed increased uniformity and centralization of control over policing as the means to quell disquiet about the police (Reiner, 1992). Simultaneously, the Unit Beat System of patrol was implemented, placing increased emphasis on crime solving, and less on personal contact between the fabled bobby and the community. In combination, these signaled a concern by government to exert more detailed control over the duties and organization of the police. By 1978 Reiner had identified a trend away from reliance on military discipline and the gradual emergence of a concern with people management (cited in Reiner, 1992:77). Attempts were made as early as the 1960s to recruit graduates to the service, and senior officers were encouraged to further their education. With the Edmund-Davies pay award (1979), officers remuneration packages were improved substantially. Despite such initiatives, it was clear that something of a diminution of public belief in the image of the efficient, neutral and bureaucratically governed police organization was underway. This was exacerbated by further corruption scandals in the Metropolitan Police CID in the 1970s.

The 1980s saw a highly publicized series of riots in economically deprived centres in Britain.<sup>16</sup> The Brixton Riots in 1981, and urban unrest elsewhere in that decade, sent clear messages of conflict based in part on race relations between the police and members of ethnic minority communities. As a consequence of the Brixton riots, Lord Scarman was invited to enquire into the causes of the riots (Scarman, 1981). Sectors of that community and police were found to be at extreme odds with one another, and the police entered a

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<sup>16</sup> Serious public disorder also took place in industrial settings at the time. For example, during the strikes in Wapping at News International, many complaints were made against the police to the Police Complaints Authority.

new era of contentious relations with certain sections of the public. Their credibility as citizens in uniform, embodying impersonal authority, was severely shaken. They could hardly continue to claim to represent the increasingly heterogeneous ethnic cross-section of the communities they policed. Scarman's report led to a fundamental rethinking of policing, although the underlying message was not a new one (Young, 1993; Reiner, 1992). He adopted the definition of policing put forward in 1929 by Sir Richard Maine to the New Metropolitan Police: prevention of crime, and protection of public tranquility.

Scarman's recommendations contained the potentially contradictory messages of increased public order training on the one hand, and the need for improved community consultation committees on the other. From these recommendations have flowed a series of initiatives. Community policing has become a focus for policy makers and Chief Constables alike, yet, at the same time, there has been an increase in riot control training. The softer aspects of police work have been emphasized in the same breath as the hard.<sup>17</sup>

In the years immediately following Scarman's call for increased accountability in community policing other events led to the radical reframing of the public perception of the police role. The Miners' Strikes in 1984–1985 saw the police take on far more repressive policing methods, indeed more militaristic in their use of force, than ever seen before in this country (e.g. Fine & Millar, 1985). Also contrary to the police ethic, officers were transferred out of their home regions for riot duty, thus breaking the historic principle that officers should police their own communities. Unprecedented centralization of force organization and initiative came into play. Reiner (1992:85) remarks as follows:

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<sup>17</sup> A number of recent academic discussions of the care / control dichotomy have attempted to argue that these can better be understood as elements of the same entity. Walker (1994) for example, provides a sophisticated analysis of the drawbacks associated with each extreme at an intra-organizational level. He cites the 'bureaucratic principle' (p. 47) as the 'central steering mechanism' for the control dimension, with its emphasis on rational command and control systems. The system fails to control absolutely because officers have well-documented autonomy, and spatial distance from supervisors. At the other extreme, a care focused organization would, in Walker's view, 'enhance values of autonomy, individual utility and nurturance, and rational consensus' (p. 49). He argues that care and control dimensions tend to develop in mutually exclusive ways. Heidensohn (1994) considers the different issue of public order duties as a possible expression of 'care', and vice versa.



‘the militarisation of policing has proceeded apace in the 1980s in the wake of yet more serious disorder’.

The terms of the present battle between government and the police themselves for control over the future of policing were framed in the 1979 Conservative Party election victory (e.g. Young, 1993:3).<sup>18</sup> The market force ideology of the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher brought with it the dismantling of much of the public sector, and a redrawing of the social geography of Britain. Both have had profound effects on how the police organization is arranged, and on police work. Other authors also make the link between broader changes in the political economy and the future of policing. Waters and Brown (1993) argue that recent governments and the police service have offered quite different models for the development of police policy, and identify an emphasis on professional guidelines, codes of ethics and service charters<sup>19</sup> in police circles. Government and the Home Office, on the other hand, lay emphasis on management efficiencies and on economic rationality. It could be argued that both strands are engaging in a struggle to create a governing ideology, according to which police practices and policies can be channeled, and against which these can be judged.

Battles over defining police work aside, there were other changes afoot that would profoundly influence policing in England. In 1984 The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) was passed, and marked an increasing concern with procedural propriety and neutrality. Not only did the Act enhance police powers of stop, search and arrest, it also introduced a raft of detailed procedures to regulate the detention and interrogation of suspects. Then, in 1990, ACPO, the Superintendents Association, and the Police

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<sup>18</sup> Waddington (*Independent*, 01/07/93) argues strongly that the efficiency argument proposed by the conservative government in the early 1990s had two sides to it. The overt side was an efficiency drive, aimed at more effective crime fighting. Waddington argues vigorously that the covert, hidden agenda was to increase central control of the police.

<sup>19</sup> The rhetoric of ‘charters’ is, however, very much in the province of the conservative government under Major in the early 1990s, as expressed in the so-called Citizen’s Charter.

Federation collaborated in unprecedented manner to produce the *Operational Policing Review* (Home Office, 1990) which amounted to the first national level response to declining confidence in the police. Shortly afterwards, a *Statement of Common Purpose and Values* was produced, which attempted to articulate an alignment of police aims and community expectations, and placed great emphasis on the service aspect of policing (Reiner, 1992:266). Out of this developed the *Strategic Document of Quality of Service*, again endorsed (at least formally) by all three police staff associations, thereby introducing an apparent focus for force policy and planning. The language of quality, service and strategy were becoming part of the everyday police lexicon.

Waters and Brown (1993) note that the Audit Commission produced two further influential papers, reviewing the provincial police organization and financial arrangements. These papers were imbued with concerns with rationalization and reducing management overheads. Reduction in numbers of ranks was proposed, as was increasing the size of police areas to reduce management costs. In addition, devolution of financial control was proposed as a mechanism for increasing accountability for actual expenditure, and was presented as a means through which decision making could be optimized and efficiency enhanced. The proposals contained clear messages about devolved cost accountability to separate Constabularies, and then within the area command units of each of those. Waters and Brown (1993) argue that this signals a political intention to shed responsibility for the outcome of police matters to Constabularies.

These assumptions about efficiency and effectiveness gained prominence with the presentation of an influential White Paper to parliament, *Police Reform: A Police Service for the Twenty-First Century*<sup>20</sup> (Home Office, 1993a). The paper outlined revised

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<sup>20</sup> The approaching millennium has provided an apparent focus for re-thinking (e.g. conclusions in Reiner, 1992) the question of public and political expectations of the police role. It also provides a convenient focus for policy formulation and implementation by government, as in the 1993 White Paper.

proposals for reporting arrangements between the Home Secretary, local representation on the police authorities, government representative Councillors, and local magistrates. In addition, the paper proposed a future reduction in the total number of constabularies from 43, and the imposition of cash limits to government funding. Young (1993:5) remarks that the 43 forces exist in something of an 'uneasy calm', and that despite denials to the contrary by successive Home Secretaries, social policy seems to indicate nine or ten amalgamated forces in the future.<sup>21</sup>

Less dramatically, yet with great impact for contemporary forces, The Sheehy Inquiry, reporting in 1993, had a remit to consider the structure of ranks, remuneration and conditions of service for police officers. The Inquiry produced a swathe of recommendations, which were presented as the means through which to achieve effective management. The members of the committee of inquiry were drawn largely from the private sector, and had little experience of the police organization, perhaps indicating the prominence of market force ideologies in government circles at the time. The private sector impact is particularly notable in the drawing of comparisons of rates of pay between the police ranks and other employment sectors. The Inquiry also floated the idea of introducing performance-related pay into the service, and accordingly proposed rigorous performance measures.

In addition to the focus on pay and efficiency, the Inquiry propounded a flattening of the hierarchy of ranks, and a move away from the historical 'authoritative bureaucratic culture focusing on control to developing an empowering culture to give officers more responsibility' (Waters and Brown, 1993:28). An important contribution of this thesis will be to critique some of the assumptions about power and control inherent in this newly managerial discourse.

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<sup>21</sup> Over time, the number of police forces in England and Wales has declined, quite radically from 200 in 1945, to the present 43 (Van Maanen, 1979:43)

A further report was drafted in 1993 that consolidates the emerging picture of managerial assumptions about control in the police service. The Government paper was entitled *Consultation Paper on Police Personnel Procedures* (Home Office, 1993b) and proposed that the framework for discipline in the service should be updated in line with apparent changes to the style and emphasis of policing, from force to service. The central argument of the paper was that these changing demands, compounded by demands for economic efficiency and rationality, required an altogether different approach to discipline.<sup>22</sup> The document proposed a 'proper management approach' (Waters and Brown, 1993:28). This approach would encompass the range of disciplinary tools employed by managers. Senior officers would ostensibly metamorphose from commanding officers to managers of resources. Discipline was to change from command, to persuasion and consultation. Following Waters and Brown, 'this assumes a shift from police organization based on military bureaucracy to a model of professional police management' (Waters and Brown, 1993:17).<sup>23</sup>

The emergence of a new managerialism has been noted widely as an important shift in organizational emphasis, with implications for recruitment, training, career development, public and political relations, and discipline (e.g. Holdaway, 1986; Reiner, 1992, Waters and Brown, 1993; Walker, 1994). A key purpose of the present research is to explore the assumptions about managerial discipline and power in the police critically on the basis of interview data and organizational practices. One of the unique contributions of this thesis is to consider the police as an organization, from a critical perspective informed by social

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<sup>22</sup> In his study of Chief Constables, Reiner (1991:119) notes that the response to proposals since the Scarman report has been far from uniform. He finds that more than half of the Chief Constables 'still simmer with resentment at what they see as a package of reforms and a philosophy that was quite unnecessary or inappropriate for their areas, but was foisted uniformly on the country because of the problems of a few big city forces'. The overview of the development of the police organization presented in this chapter is necessarily a broad brush view of indicative and influential events in recent times.

<sup>23</sup> While there is a shift from the rhetoric of military discipline to that of managerial discipline, at the same time the symbols and practices of paramilitary policing of public order are on the increase. The recent introduction of pepper spray for use by officers in self-defense is a case in point, and in-house police newspapers and magazines abound with advertisements for body armour. It seems that (some) militaristic practices are on the increase in the police *at the same time* as the rise of explicitly managerial practices.

theory and organizational theory. By contrast, the current literature that engages with the police from an organizational perspective, is largely prescriptive. For example, Butler (1984) on *Police Management*, who assumes the efficacy of Management by Objectives. Even the discussion of resistance to the imposition of an objectives regime, albeit limited in length, is devoted to the presumption that resistance is merely an aberration to be overcome by more effective management of objectives. The text fails to take into account the well-documented intransigence of police culture (e.g. Chan, 1997; Reiner, 1992; Young, 1991; Jones, 1986; Smith and Gray, 1983; Van Maanen, 1979). It assumes uncritically that effective setting and management of objectives is the way to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in the police organization.

By contrast, Bradley, Walker and Wilkie (1986), place little emphasis on objectives in their thoroughly more informative and sensitive study of police management, other than to highlight Policing by Objectives initiatives of the early 1980s as indicative of concerns with 'value for money' (p. 144).<sup>24</sup> Their critical work presents a thorough analysis of the police management in relation to the broader questions of police purpose, the law, and democracy. The authors argue that the management of policing should take into account the broader political and policy making context, and pay considerable attention to the problems of managing police in a democratic society. They argue that many paradoxes arise for the police because they are state functionaries within a democracy. Democratic society allows for the changing majority will of the people to be expressed in its institutions. Consequently, they argue, police managers have a task that is often-shifting. Yet, they uncritically accept the shift to a managerial ethos of control, and fail to consider the introduction of managerial ideology in any depth. They advocate in conclusion the role of manager as educator, and present their book as a contribution towards 'the vital of

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<sup>24</sup> 'Policing by Objectives' was conceived of first in the United States of America in the 1970s. Lubans and Edgar (1979) produced a report so named, which promoted the adaptation and adoption of a 'management by objectives' approach to police departments nation wide. More recently, British research has questioned the enthusiasm for objectives in policing (e.g. Ackroyd & Helliwell, 1992).

spirit of progress' (p. 213). Progress and management are presented as if in inviolable accord.

One of the central aims of the present work is somewhat different: it will take a detailed look at power *within* the police organization, as articulated in officers' responses to competing rationalities of militaristic-bureaucracy, and managerialism. It will question the assumption that a move away from bureaucratic command and control necessarily implies a reduction in rationality or control. The focus of the analysis will remain within the organization, and will bring to debates about police management the perspective of critical organizational theory largely missing in the related literature. Most of the substantial body of research on the police organization has been from within criminological, legal, or public policy frameworks, and the present work is intended to complement the literature on policing generated within other disciplines.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the historical development of the police, and on the ongoing pursuit of legitimacy for the police through the assumptions and principles associated with bureaucracy. At the same time, the discussion has highlighted continuing controversies about the role of the police, how they should be organized, and how best they might be held accountable for their actions in and out of the station. These continuing controversies provide an informative example of the limitations of bureaucracy outlined in earlier theoretical discussions. The failure of minutely defined procedures, behaviours, and demeanour, to render officers' utterly controllable and predictable is further testimony to the limitations of bureaucracy. Bureaucratic assumptions, principles and structures are not able to determine officers' behaviours absolutely. This point is crucial because it highlights the extent to which Weberian assumptions about rationality and bureaucracy reflect an overly deterministic

conceptualization of power, and neglect the capacities of individuals to resist and exert some degree of influence on the 'iron cage of bureaucracy'. Such considerations of the interplay between structures and actions were highlighted in earlier theoretical discussions as crucial aspects of an analysis of power.

Having established some of the limitations of Weberian notions of power, theoretically conceived, and in the ongoing conflicts that characterize police organization, discussion in the next, and ensuing chapters, will take a critical look at a range of practices that might prove more revealing of the complexity of power. These will include considerations of *practices* associated with: 1) increasingly overt management of the police; 2) and with competing hierarchies such as rank, gender, and different types and definitions of police work. Central to the critical assessment of this range of power-related practices is the contention that these are informed by the actions of individuals, actions which recreate and shape the very power relations that informed those actions in the first place.

## Chapter 6

### The culture problem

Chapter 5 has established the extent to which assumptions about rationality and calculability informed the development of the police organization over time, and has used the example of the police organization to illustrate some of the limitations of the over-determined conceptualization of power that informs assumptions about the capacities of bureaucracy to impose order on individuals.

The previous chapter also outlined more recent controversies about police accountability, and identified what has been seen to be something of a crisis of police legitimacy since the 1950s. The discussion has shown the rise in varied demands for changes to police accountability, in response to a host of allegations of police corruption, problematic race relations, malpractice, and cuts in public expenditure on the police. It has shown management by objectives as one of the key mechanism adopted by the Home Office and the police organization in the pursuit of financial accountability, and as a means through which to control and regulate officers' behaviours and performance. The chapter also highlighted an important shift from reliance on authoritarian bureaucracy to increasing pursuit of control of officers and police work through the rhetoric of empowerment and culture management.

Earlier theoretical discussions have examined the contributions of Foucault in conceiving of power as both constraining and productive, and also presented some of the ways in which practice-related ideas about power have been approached in critical organizational studies. This thesis will turn in this and in the ensuing chapters to a closer consideration



of the police organization as a means through which to explore the strengths and weakness of power conceived of in such a productive way.

To that end, this chapter will first discuss in some detail the many practices associated with police culture, and in so doing will take a close and critical look at the assumptions that inform more recent attempts to manage aspects of that culture. It will provide a critical overview of a host of insightful descriptions of what has come to be known as 'cop canteen culture' (e.g. Fielding, 1994; Manning, 1977). Indeed, the management of that culture is widely seen as the key to reform on many fronts in the service. The underpinning, and problematic, assumption is that it is possible to manage culture, and to channel it in particular directions.

This chapter will therefore sketch the characteristics of police culture as described in the related literature, and will outline some of the management policies endorsed by the Home Office which are specifically aimed at managing police culture. The chapter will critically assess the gendered nature of the police culture, and the problematic position of police women in the organization. The neglect of police women and of gender in much police literature harks back to critiques of the failure of both Weber and Foucault to adequately incorporate the gendered-nature of power asymmetries in their analyses, and marks the intention of this thesis to incorporate gender as an important aspect of the analysis of power. In addition to critically evaluating police culture, this chapter will also provide necessary background information for the analysis in ensuing empirical chapters of power-related practices in the police force studied for the purposes of this research.

## **Police culture**

A number of studies of the police refer at some point to the importance of police culture, the intermingling of rituals, roles, rites and practices that characterize the police organization (e.g. Crank, 1998; Chan, 1996; 1997; Reiner, 1992; Young, 1993, 1991;

Brown, 1992; Heidensohn, 1992; Walker, 1991; Reuss-Ianni & Ianni, 1983; Holdaway, 1979; Manning, 1977). Commentators have placed great emphasis on that culture as a significant obstacle to, and focus for, change in the police. Even the most recent studies stress the continued resistance to cultural change (Brown, 1998; Chan, 1997). It is in the rituals and practices of the organizational culture that many analyses turn for explanation of the often claimed resistance to change in the police.

This section will outline the general features of that culture, and it is appropriate to begin with the widely documented discretion junior officers have when out and about on duty, away from the direct supervision of their senior officers (e.g. Manning, 1979; Brogden, Jefferson & Walklate, 1988). The lowest ranking officers are said to gain the greatest control over their duties the further they are from the station, because it is there they interpret and decide whether to enact the law.

In the enactment of that discretion lies room for allegations of malpractice, discrimination, and incompetence. It is not surprising therefore, that concerns with reforming police practice, or the image of the police organization, are to some extent fuelled by concerns to limit the scope for discretion on the job. Punch (1983:230) argues that instances of deviance by junior officers reveal the *lack* of control that senior officers have, and forces them to impose close supervision over lower ranks. This imposition of authority is in turn resented by junior officers as an infringement of their traditional autonomy on the beat. Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987) and elsewhere Brogden *et al.* (1988) accordingly advocate the necessity to curtail that discretion through increasing the precision of detailed legal frameworks to reduce the scope for discretion.<sup>1</sup> However, it could be argued that over-concern with prescriptive legal structures ignores the discretion officers will always have in the enactment of laws, no matter how closely defined.

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<sup>1</sup> These authors do not disregard the cultural aspects of police work, however, their emphasis is on structural, determining constraints such as the law.

Descriptions of the culture highlight the importance of the physical danger associated with police work, and the risks officers face in carrying out their jobs (e.g. Graef, 1989). The emphasis is placed on the danger that *might* be present in any interaction during the course of everyday duties. The discourses of the canteen culture emphasize the potential for a situation to become unexpectedly violent or somehow explosive, and to have to deal with unknown risk. This might be in the form of physical violence or verbal attack. Actual dangerous events, the threat of dangerous events, and talking about the danger of police work seem to become blurred, and fused.<sup>2</sup> In this danger discourse, the force element of police work is elevated above the service element, as discussed in Chapter 5.<sup>3</sup>

The corollary of the danger discourse is that officers are able to regard themselves as potential (or actual) heroes, who face great danger to protect the weak in society from what Reiner (1992) refers to as the dangerous underclasses. Danger, risk, and a sense of mission combine to inform a paternalistic, socially conservative culture, intent on preserving the status quo, and its implicit middle class values.<sup>4</sup> The missionary-like calling to protect the weak from the oppressor is an explicit part of the culture, with the police playing the part of hero and protector.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The literature on stress as an outcome of police occupational culture underscores interest in, and claims about, the prevalence of danger and risk in police work. (e.g. Brown & Fielding, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> For example Heidensohn (1994) and collection of papers in Stephens & Becker (1994), all argue that force and service might better be regarded as part of the same process, each facet dependent on the other.

<sup>4</sup> The protection of middle class traditional values described here does apply specifically to Anglo-American policing models. Brogden (1996) provides a useful counter example in his analysis of the indigenisation of policing in South Africa. One consequence of institutional inequality between black and white populations is the lack of a broad set of shared social values that might legitimize policing. In effect, there is no consensus as to the set of values that is to be 'protected' by the police. The lack of homogeneity between and within cultures has seen the rise of three forms of policing: state police, private security companies in predominantly white/materially affluent areas, and informal non-state policing that has developed in the traditionally black/materially impoverished townships.

<sup>5</sup> The missionary quality of the police culture brings to mind Max Weber's emphasis on the Protestant Work Ethic (Weber, 1958). Weber sought to explain religious influence on economic behaviour, and placed great import on the meanings invested in human actions, such as economic effort. The sense of mission that is said to imbue the police occupational culture is evocative of a Weberian blend of meaning propelling and giving shape to action.

Closely allied is the recurring theme of machismo. The stereotypical male attributes said to be valued in that culture include overt heterosexuality, physicality, toughness (e.g. Fielding, 1994; Heidensohn, 1992; Jones, 1986), and homophobia (e.g. Burke, 1993). Alongside the overtly masculine discourse, is an action orientation that insists on achieving results, making arrests, having an impact on events and in the workplace. Also well documented, and intricately bound up in the stereotypically masculine culture are allegations about rampant sexism, and racism in the police organization (e.g. Chan, 1997; Anderson, Brown & Campbell, 1993; Jones, 1986; Smith & Grey, 1983; Holdaway, 1983). Although Reiner (1992:125) remarks that the police are only marginally more racist than the English population as a whole, the coercive powers that police have over the communities they patrol suggests that racism of any level should be regarded as highly problematic (e.g. Guardian, 6/9/98:1).

Central to, and closely allied with the paternalistic cocktail described above, is the concept of authority. Commentators have remarked on the apparent requirement that officers maintain the impression of authority in any circumstances (e.g. Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; Skolnick, 1966), both in public, and amongst colleagues. Much of this authority derives from the legal power officers have, to exert coercive power over the public. Furthermore, the centrality of the bureaucratic organizing principle is imbued with important assumptions about impersonal authority: the individual officer assumes the authority vested in the police uniform, and acquires a combination of legal authority and apparent impartiality, themes which are explicitly Weberian in origin.

Commentators on police culture remark on the demand for group solidarity between officers, and the requirement that officers fit in, and identify overtly with group norms (e.g. Fielding, 1994; Young, 1993).<sup>6</sup> Skolnick & Fyfe (1993) go so far as to suggest a

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<sup>6</sup> Morgan (1996) highlights a range of research that has shown the dynamic processes that operate within bureaucracies (e.g. Selznick, 1966). He extends the critique by suggesting that some of the tensions between hierarchy and sub-group solidarity are expressive of the 'generation and reproduction of

brotherhood [sic] amongst police officers that spans national borders. An important theme underpinning this solidarity is officers' dependence on each others' response to calls for assistance during a crisis.

Equally, group solidarity is said to arise from the sometimes adversarial relationship between officers and some of the communities they police. A binary mindset is said to develop, which heightens the differences between 'them' (the dangerous underclass) and 'us' (the protectors of society). This mindset is exaggerated in the danger discourse outlined above, and is mirrored in public and political concern with the so-called war on crime.<sup>7</sup> The police appear to band together in the face of perceived adversaries, and in conjunction with anti-social shift patterns, are said to socialize with other officers as an act of self and group preservation. A consequence of this aspect of the culture is isolation and insularity. It is unsurprising therefore that the often-alleged Masonic presence in the service serves to feed concerns about secrecy.<sup>8</sup> Secrecy invites accusations of unaccountability and potential abuse of influence. At the same time, it points to the

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masculinities' (Morgan, 1996:49). Morgan differentiates between the individualistic, competitive modes of masculinity, and more collective group modes of expressing masculinity. Succeeding in promotion competitions in an organizational hierarchy stresses the individualistic competitiveness of (male) success, while solidarity at other levels (on grounds of class, race, or education, for example) might reinforce or contradict individual modes of 'doing masculinity'. In terms of the present argument, Morgan's contribution is to highlight the extent to which hierarchy, bureaucracy, and some cultural processes are given form by concerns with different, sometimes contradictory modes of masculinity. Elsewhere, Collinson & Hearn (1994) make two related points. Firstly, they argue that 'particular masculinities are frequently embedded (but often unacknowledged) in organizational power relations, discourses and practices' (p. 10). However, they also acknowledge that while labour relations might be shaped to some extent by modes of masculinity, these are not necessarily *determined* entirely by such gendered concerns.

<sup>7</sup> Holdaway (1983) talks of seven distinguishable groups generated from within the police view of social order and status. Not all of these relate to criminal elements. Holdaway talks of: good class villains (professional villains, worth pursuing, and engaging in the rules of the police game), police property (low-status groups such as travelers), rubbish (insoluble, messy problems, including domestic violence), challengers (doctors, lawyers, social workers who might intrude on the police world), disarmers (groups who might attract sympathy for a claim against the police, including women, children, and elderly victims), do-gooders (anti-police activists), and politicians (seen to be remote and self-seeking) (cf. discussion of these categories in Reiner, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> The Home Office, in the person of Alun Michael, Minister of State, is to write to all of the country's police officers with a demand that they reveal whether or not they are Freemasons (The Independent, Saturday, 15/08/98:5). Young (1993:207) ascribes some importance to the effects of freemasonry in the West Mercia police.

importance of divisions and hierarchies within the culture, as Masonic influence is not necessarily universal.

Group solidarity, dependency on other officers for backup on the street, and within the same rank, *are* significant features of the police culture, despite differences and divisions. Observers remark that group loyalty is most strongly expressed at the level of the smallest group with which the officer identifies in a given situation: the shift, the same rank, the station, the area, the force, and eventually, the police organization. Punch (1983) remarks that secrecy and solidarity describe police officers relationship towards outsiders, and also to others within the force outside of the smallest group to which [each officer] belonged. He places great emphasis on *inter-rank* antagonism.

In similar vein, Young (1993) insists on variety in what he calls the 'cultural ethnicity' of the West Mercia Constabulary. His detailed analysis illustrates the continued identification officers have with their particular region of origin. Officers from each of the three component regions are said to value aspects of police work and traditions differently. Accordingly, they pass on a conception of policing that is informed by local oral histories and mythologies.

Other observers of police culture have also insisted upon a multiple conceptualization of police culture. Reuss-Ianni & Ianni (1983:252), for example, remark on the important distinction in culture between 'management cops' and 'street cops' in United States policing. These authors argue that street cop culture, representing the lowest ranks, values traditional policing, respect from the community, and expresses nostalgia for the romanticized old days of policing. Here the character of police work and purpose of policing are seen to be threatened by external social and political threats. They argue that it is at this level that the greatest solidarity amongst officers might be expected. On the

other hand, management cops are said to work in greater isolation from each other and to be more concerned with external audiences and evaluators.

There are two notable contributions in the police literature on culture, both of which attempt more theoretically informed analyses. The first is Walker's (1991) intricate and lengthy consideration of police culture as an inhibitor to the successful implementation of policy in the police. In his study of relations of power in four Scottish police divisions, Walker focuses on the formal line organization, and in particular, the part played by Sergeants as intermediaries between senior ranks and more junior Constables. He identifies mutually instrumental attitudes between ranks, that hamper attempts to harmonize relations at all levels, while identifying certain grounds for continuity and similarity between ranks. Walker acknowledges briefly the controversies surrounding the subject of power. He is explicit in his aim to avoid entanglement in controversy over epistemology, methodology, and authorial assumptions. He concentrates on developing a specific binary model of intra-organizational power relations (Walker, 1991:107) in which he focuses explicitly on normative and instrumental power relations. Instrumental power relations refer to individuals seeking to exploit material resources and capabilities inherent in their formal organizational position. Normative power relations encompass the strategic deployment and balance of symbolic resources available to each individual. In Walker's words: 'Suffice to say for the moment that power over people and power over things are typically implicated in seamless webs of mutual causality' (Walker, 1991:115).

Walker's insistence on the utility of his binary model of power relations is informed by his intention to provide explicit recommendations for policy form. While his theoretically informed analysis is a welcome addition to the analysis of police culture, it can justifiably be criticized in two ways. Firstly, his concern to provide remedial advice on policy implementation, leads him to seek solutions in structural definitions. In his conclusion, Walker (1991:609) insists as follows:

*It is contended that structural reform can succeed ... not in spite of cultural resistance, but precisely because it is capable of treating and ultimately eradicating the causes of such resistance [emphasis original].*

Walker's analysis is entirely over-determined, and is based on an unsustainable assumption that structures determine action absolutely. In his assertion that all resistance can be eradicated by further structural reform, Walker appears to ignore the critiques of over-determined conceptualizations of power outlined in earlier theoretical chapters in this thesis.

Secondly, Walker dismisses both gender and race and as insignificant biographical details in the workings of police culture. In his pursuit of policy prescription, and neglect of key gendered hierarchies, Walker undermines his otherwise insightful analysis of police culture, and does not take on board the potential complexities of competing hierarchies of power. In his insistence on a binary model of power relations, and the dyadic focus on relations at an individual level, and despite his incorporation of a relational perspective on power, Walker leaves much room for analysis of power practices in the organization in terms of individual action, resistance, and related concerns with subjectivity and identity.

Chan (1997; 1996) offers another rare explanation of the workings of police culture, this time in Australia. She analyses the attempts by John Avery, newly appointed commissioner of the New South Wales Police Department in 1984, to reform inefficiencies, corruption and racism within that police organization. Chan's analysis pays particular attention to the problem of racism within the police in an increasingly heterogeneous racial society. Chan is forced to address the persistent question: Why did the reforms, and their emphasis on community policing, fail?



Chan argues that much of the failure of reform lies in the inappropriate conceptualization of police culture, and she usefully argues for a more theoretically informed approach.<sup>9</sup> She advocates the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977), and draws on his ideas of *habitus* and *field* to better explain police culture. Bourdieu argues that society is made up of a number of reasonably autonomous fields, or social spaces within which participants struggle for control of particular power and authority (see Chan, 1997:71). *Habitus*, on the other hand, represents a 'system of dispositions' in which past experiences are integrated. Chan notes the similarities between *habitus* and cultural knowledge as represented by Schein (1985) and elsewhere (e.g. Sackmann, 1991). Chan argues that one of the strengths of this approach is that *habitus* and *field* are seen to function in relation to each other.

In particular she argues the need to recognize the intersection between structural and cultural factors, and the necessity to allow for notions of cultural change. In other words, Chan argues that a theory of police culture must account for structure and for agency (the capacity for individual's to exert influence) on the part of officers. In her empirical study, she aligns the structural conditions of police work with Bourdieu's notion of *field*, and produces an interactive model of the production of police practice. In this model, cultural knowledge (*habitus*), structural conditions (the *field*) and police practice interact with and upon police actors, and vice versa. Elsewhere, Young (1993) also makes brief use of the same concepts.

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<sup>9</sup> Chan provides a useful description of various perspectives on culture. She identifies three different approaches: culture as knowledge (drawing on Schein, 1985, and Sackmann, 1991). Here culture is presented as cognitive construct, the learned outcome of group experiences. Sackmann develops the analysis to present four types of cultural knowledge: dictionary knowledge (definitions and labels); directory knowledge (descriptions of 'how things are done'); recipe knowledge (prescribes situationally appropriate action); and axiomatic knowledge (fundamental assumptions about why things are done as they are). In contrast to these rather deterministic conceptualizations of culture, Chan presents the work of Shearing and Erikson (1991). The latter authors argue that officers are active in constructing and referring to culture, yet Chan expresses concern that they do this perhaps to the neglect of the social and political contexts in which these constructions take place. Chan finally locates Bourdieu's (1977) work as culture of relations.

To Chan's enormous credit, she attempts a dynamic view of police culture, in which she accords importance to structural determining factors, and individual actions. Her conclusions tend towards the structural, inviting further analysis of police racism by examination of structural and cultural organization of police work, and closer consideration of the inadequacy of accountability mechanisms. Despite her emphasis on structural solutions, she does recognize the crucial relationship between rules and culture, between structure and cultural practices. In accounting for the failure of Avery's reform process, Chan concludes that too much attention was paid to changing the *habitus* (cultural knowledge ) rather than the *field* (the social and politically informed structures in which culture operates). Chan acknowledges the irony in this return to structural solutions, and qualifies it by reminding police reformers that changing the field does not necessarily lead to changed cultural practice. It is crucial that this point is absorbed in discussions of police culture.

### **The place of women**

The historical development of the police organization as outlined in Chapter 5 in effect describes the experience of male (by and large white) officers. With a few notable exceptions, the marginalization of women, and of gendered processes in the police organization is typical. In order to restore some balance in the history of police development, Heidensohn (1992) describes at length the formation of the separate specialist force of women officers. The first police patrols by women were introduced during the First World War, for the explicit purpose of so-called preventative work amongst girls and women in areas adjacent to military camps. Their day-to-day work concerned the protection of children, and the morality, reputation and decency of women. Their limited remit was a direct consequence of patriarchal assumptions of the time about the role and place of women in society as a whole, and within policing in particular.

The first women officers with some powers of arrest were employed in the early twentieth century. The all-female divisions, with a domestic remit (Young 1991:194), functioned separately from the [male] police constabularies until the years leading up to the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975. In that time, policewomen and caring duties became synonymous, laying the groundwork for some of the continuing assumptions about the place and role of police women.

Despite the amalgamation of the two separate forces in the mid 1980s, contemporary studies reveal deep-seated and ongoing resistance to the presence of women in the service.<sup>10</sup> Anderson *et al.* (1993) conducted a quantitative survey of officers in ten forces, to assess the levels of sexual discrimination in the police in terms of career advancement, deployment, access to training, overtime and benefits, and sexual harassment of officers. The results on sexual harassment, published shortly before the present work commenced, were shocking. No fewer than 6 percent of female officers reported having been seriously sexually assaulted by colleagues.<sup>11</sup> Even the recent report by Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC, 1996) raises concerns about ongoing sexual harassment and discrimination.

Despite such findings, much of the literature on the organization and management of the police service has tended to neglect gendered divisions and practices (e.g. Skolnick & Fyfe, 1993; Van Maanen, 1992, 1973; Walker, 1991; Jermier, Slocum, Fry & Gaines, 1991; Punch 1983; Jermier & Berkes 1979; Bittner 1967). There is, however, a growing

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<sup>10</sup> The high profile case in the early 1990s of Assistant Chief Constable Alison Halford has proven to be influential in raising the problem of sexual discrimination within the police organization in the public eye. Her unfair dismissal grievance was settled out of court, but the form the allegations and counter allegations took are indicative of some of the problems women face in the force. She alleged discrimination against her career progress because of her gender, and after going public with the claim, found her sexual orientation used as a weapon by Senior officers in the media battle against her credibility (Halford, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> In absolute numbers, 6% of the sample translates into 53 women officers reporting serious sexual assault, while three in ten policewomen reported experience of unwanted touching, defined as 'unpleasant' in the closed-choice questionnaire survey (Anderson *et al.* 1993:70).

number of studies that highlight the significance of gender concerns and constraints in the police (e.g. Brown, 1992; Graef, 1989; Reiner, 1985; Holdaway, 1983; Smith & Gray, 1983). Yet, many of these accounts are often descriptive, with little attention to interpretive *theoretical* frameworks. One recent exception is the contribution by Fielding (1994), which introduces a useful analytical focus on the influence of masculinities within the police service.

Fielding (1994) considers police occupational culture as a gendered social institution. He usefully moves beyond generalized statements as to the macho nature of policing, and argues that notions of culture and of masculinity are not monolithic. His focus however, remains firmly on masculinity, and explicitly not on femininity. He defends this approach through asserting that '[police]women are still effectively "ghettoized" in particular duties' (Fielding, 1994:56), and as a consequence have no definitive impact on canteen culture. Fielding suggests that due to there being 'little evidence of female occupational culture among British police ... it cannot be empirically established whether it would be characterized by distinctive "feminine" adaptations to the role' (Fielding, 1994:52). However, Fielding pays no attention to women's detailed responses to that culture.

While elsewhere acknowledging cultural diversity within the police, Young (1991) leans towards the so-called hard side of policing and its relationship to a particular kind of masculinity which stresses that camaraderie is a necessary mechanism for coping with police work. Acknowledging that 'policemen are overtly and consistently hostile towards women in "the job"' (Young, 1991:193), Young argues that women are structurally marginalised within the police force, 'to an extended world of domesticity' (Young, 1991:194). Yet despite these arguments, Young tends to treat gender roles in the police as a given, defined by unchanging structures.

Both Heidensohn (1992) and Jones (1986) document, describe and challenge the heavily masculine assumptions that define police work as best suited to men. They each seek to explain why these gendered processes develop and persist with reference to the social control/law enforcement element of police work. Heidensohn refers to men's 'gendered claim to sole ownership of the rights to social control' (1992:14), while Jones highlights both danger and authority, stating that 'the symbolic imagery associated with this order-maintaining function, and in the law-enforcement role, reflects and reinforces the belief in the "natural order", in which men are strong and women are weak and need protecting' (1986:13-14). Heidensohn (1992) argues that the gendered workplace culture of the police force 'has been rather more readily *justified* than properly *explained* (emphasis in the original)' (1992:13). Her comparative study explores the role of women as agents of social control in Britain and the United States. She demonstrates how the definition of police work as hard, dangerous and requiring authority is frequently seen as 'unsuitable for women' because they are believed to be unable to 'cope with danger, do not command authority, and should not be exposed to degradation' (1992:200-201). She argues that it is necessary to 'explore the importance of gender as opposed to local and occupational cultures in the forming of the experiences of women police' (1992:29).

Despite ongoing adverse publicity, and a great deal of police rhetoric about equality of opportunity, Brown (1998:280) is forced to conclude her recent summation of aspects of discriminatory treatment of women police officers as follows:

*Twenty years of equal opportunities and other policy initiatives may have been necessary but in themselves insufficient conditions to change the working environment dramatically for officers, men and women ... Perhaps this signals the need for further deconstruction of the police occupational culture and its powerful hold in defining the working styles and practices of men and the obstacles this creates for women in the police service.*

Rather than call for increased management of police culture, Brown refreshingly proposes greater deconstruction of the associated practices and consequences. The present research seeks to give policewomen as much analytical attention as policemen, and will therefore introduce gender as an important analytical concept throughout the work. Indeed, gender is likely to be particularly revealing of the workings of power within the police organization. Where numbers of ethnic minority women officers allow, the interactions of gender and race will be also considered.

### **Management 'solutions'**

The reformist agenda of the police organization has led in part to a number of management initiatives. Monitoring of performance, quality of service provision, accountability, equality of opportunity are all recurring themes. The actual form and timing of the introduction of management techniques such as appraisal, career development, performance monitoring appear to be left to the discretion and authority of local Constabularies. However, the *requirement* for the introduction of management tools is reinforced through Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) annual inspection reports. That the Derbyshire Constabulary temporarily lost their license to police on the advice of HMIC, until certain fiscal and managerial requirements had been met, is indicative of the centralized influence over the management of apparently independent constabularies.

The Annual Reports produced by the 43 Constabularies illustrate the emphasis on performance management. They reflect monitored results, responses to calls, complaints from the public amongst a host of other measures. Constabularies are also required to present these in a form that resembles management accounting documents [see Appendix A for an example]. The annual inspections by HMIC [see Appendix B] monitor in great detail the performance of each Constabulary according to an overarching set of requirements, and set action targets and plans for their achievement by the next annual inspection. Despite the claims for cultural diversity within and between forces (e.g. HMIC, 1996), there are profoundly directive and unifying demands at work in these management tools [see Appendix C].

The general approach to and importance of managing officers' behaviour and attitudes is exemplified in a report entitled *Developing Diversity in the Police Service* (HMIC, 1996). This major report draws together information from formal inspections carried out in thirteen different Constabularies. It also draws on material and recommendations from other performance reviews conducted by HMIC since 1992, and includes the findings of the *Report on the Police Service and Racial Equality* (Oakley, 1994).

In sum, the HMIC report underlines an important shift in police organizational ideology, away from the more overt militaristic discipline and control residing in the bureaucratic structuring principles of the organization, towards the self-discipline inherent in the 'management of hearts and minds'. Overt discipline, while still present in the police, is to be supplemented by self-discipline, self-management, and self-development.

The *Developing Diversity* document suggests that Equal Opportunities has become a vehicle for the introduction of a host of management techniques. The imperative for managing diversity can be seen to derive, as described earlier, from financial restraints, public scrutiny, and perhaps some sincere intent to introduce meritocratic principles into

the police bureaucracy. The report acknowledges that the host of initiatives advocated by HMIC have made some progress 'from a standing start' (HMIC, 1996:9).

The report explicitly locates the *rationale of management* at the centre of police organizational strategy for the future. The crucial assumption is that management of culture is achievable, that the informal culture can and must be directed and channeled. Resistance is equated with intransigence, and lack of understanding. The report adopts a 'false consciousness' approach in explaining some of the intransigence of the culture: many officers fail to grasp 'how or why managing diverse groups of people is a crucial concept in the effective policing of society' (HMIC, 1996:10).

The report argues in favour of managerialism in terms couched in the politically correct rubric of equality of opportunity. It incorporates in its argument the language and assumptions of human relations management, stressing the need to nurture people, rather than merely manage systems and structures. At the same time, the rationale of financial restraint is woven into the argument, and the report accordingly recommends that 'the Service needs to develop a *performance* culture which will maximize the potential of all members of forces – police and civilian staff alike' (HMIC, 1996:11). Both evaluative and developmental aspects inform the report's recommendations.

The report provides detailed description of equal opportunities guidelines, and indicates practical steps forces could take towards designing non-discriminatory practices in assessments for promotion, recruitment strategies and processes, information packs, interviewing techniques, amongst others.<sup>12</sup> The present argument recognizes that

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<sup>12</sup> Research into equality of opportunity in recruitment practices exemplifies some of these tensions. Collinson, Knights & Collinson (1990) make a convincing case for non-discriminatory policy frameworks to ensure equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection policies. However, far from recycling the merits of training, and policy formulation *per se*, the authors introduce a necessary critical perspective to the literature on sex discrimination in recruitment, by introducing power into their analysis. They critique liberal perspectives on equal opportunities for overemphasizing the fairness of meritocratic procedures, while failing to consider the 'unequal conditions and consequences of these procedures' (Collinson, *et al.*



concerns about equality of opportunity *are* highly significant, as are associated problems of quality and content of officers performance of their duties, behaviour towards each other, and the public. Indeed, these matters are of crucial importance in organizations like the police, fire service, social services and the National Health Service, where officers and professionals have powers over communities, and responsibilities that impinge greatly on the quality of the lives of others.<sup>13</sup>

The rhetoric of performance improvement pervades the HMIC report. Accordingly, performance appraisal is identified as 'the bedrock of good management' and vital to 'securing performance improvement' (HMIC, 1996:35) via the twin strategies of career development on the one hand, and the management of performance on the other [see Appendix D for an example from one force]. HMIC go so far as to locate appraisal as a core management process, and explicitly exhort forces to make it a priority for action. As an assumed 'dynamic instrument for improvement' (p. 36) appraisals are presented as powerful vehicles for organizational change, supported by force-wide training in the importance of diversity.

The report identifies widely reported lack of faith in the appraisal system, poor training of appraisers, avoidance of the tasks of appraising by managers, potential bias in appraisals, backlog of appraisals, and the perceived irrelevance of appraisals in promotion decisions. Similar lack of faith is noted with regard to the internal grievance procedure, a policy designed to give officers formal avenues to pursue complaints of unfair treatment in the organization. All forces are said to have such a policy in place, under the direction of Home Office Circular 16/93 (HMIC, 1996). The diversity report emphasizes past

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1990:11). These unequal conditions and consequences are seen to arise from power structures and dynamics.

<sup>13</sup> The collection of papers in Wilkinson & Willmott (1995) approaches the burgeoning rhetoric of quality management from a critical perspective, questioning many of the assumptions and limitations in approaches such as Quality Circles, and Total Quality Management.

improvements made in the forms for recording and monitoring grievances, but indicates the lack of credibility ascribed to the procedures at many levels. Yet, it insists that imperfections in the systems are to be approached via improved training and management.

Indeed, although management practices might not have achieved acceptance throughout the force, or even amongst all senior officers, the rhetoric of management seems to have achieved something of an ideological pre-eminence at policy making levels in the police organization. The present work questions the managerialist assumptions and prescriptions of the HMIC report. It adopts a critical stance to concepts of management by introducing power into the analysis, and will take a novel and necessary look at the conditions, processes and consequences of the related managerial discourse in the police organization.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has engaged critically with the much vaunted concept of 'canteen culture' in the police. It has highlighted the problematic place of policewomen in much of the related literature, and in the police organization itself, and in so doing seeks to locate gender as an integral part of this analysis of power. Furthermore, the analysis in this chapter has argued that much of the literature relating to police culture engages with the concepts and practices in a largely descriptive way. It has argued that the few more theoretically grounded assessments of police culture, such as those proffered by Walker (1991), and more recently by Chan (1997; 1996), can be criticized for lapsing into over-determined conclusions. Both Walker and Chan advise structural change as the route to removing cultural intransigence, although Chan does this with more caution than does Walker. This thesis, drawing on earlier theoretical discussions, argues that the over-determined focus on structure of Walker, and of Chan, fails to engage critically with the complexity of

relationship between power and resistance, between structures and actions. Neither of these authors engages critically with the complex question as to where 'structures' end and practices begin, nor do they specify what they mean by structures.

This thesis argues that an over-concentration on structural solutions to problems associated with 'canteen culture' fails to incorporate the potential for individuals to interact with, and shape in some measure the cultural practices in which they engage. If resistance to changing aspects of police culture were truly eradicable, as Walker would propose, surely the structures would long-since have been put in place to achieve that change. This thesis argues that organizational cultures, such as those of the police, are apparently resistant to change precisely because cultural practices are imbued with manifestations of the subjective at work. Attempts to manage culture inevitably approach and potentially threaten a host of vested identity interests and concerns. Consequently, resistance and defensive orientations, in various forms and degrees, are perhaps as inevitable in organizations as is the failure of structure to eradicate resistance completely.

Discussions in the following chapters will address the question implicit in the critique developed in this chapter: how do we gain a better understanding of resistance to change in the police, and of police culture itself? This thesis argues that these ongoing practices might best be examined by looking at the range of power-related practices that underpin resistance, and cultural practices. To that end, the ensuing analyses will draw on Foucault's conceptualization of power as both constraining and productive, and will seek to explore this conceptualization of power by focusing on the often interrelated practices of management, hierarchies, and gender. The empirical analyses will also consider the ways in which workplace practices exacerbate some aspects of identity insecurities, while reinforcing the status of other aspects of identity amongst officers. The point is not that individuals are insecure per se, but rather that aspects of individuals' identities are alternately reinforced, undermined, or threatened by organizational demands.

Furthermore, the key issue here is that their active engagement in managing aspects of their identity is a reflection of their role as agents in shaping the very structures (such as rank hierarchies, management control systems, gender) that in some measure, may determine aspects of their actions.

However, before delving more deeply into explorations of subjectivity, identity, management practices, and gender, it is necessary first to turn to a discussion of the research methodology adopted in this study.

## Chapter 7

### Research methodology

Earlier chapters have explored different theoretical conceptualizations of power, while the two preceding chapters have served to place the development of the police organization in historical context. At the same time, the analysis in the preceding two chapters has served to locate the police in the context of this research, as an empirical exemplar of power as it operates in the practices of organizations. This chapter marks the start of the empirical analysis. To that end, the chapter first describes the procedural conduct of the fieldwork, which was carried out in a small constabulary with both urban and rural communities, and then proceeds to argue that the research process itself is highly revealing of a range and complexity of power practices that are of importance to the present analysis of power.

Accordingly, this chapter will first outline the methods used in researching the police. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section, breaking and entering, explores the three different phases of access negotiation. The second section, research mechanics, details the nuts and bolts of the research. The third section, evidence gathering, presents an analysis of data that arose out of the research process itself.

The deconstructive methodological approach reflected in the ensuing empirical analysis has been adopted in light of the earlier theoretical discussions about the limits and constraints of positivist epistemological assumptions. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that the interrogation of the research process itself, as set out in this chapter, serves to reinforce the point made in earlier theoretical discussions that power might most

usefully be conceived in relational terms, and that a close and critical analysis of taken-for-granted organizational practices is highly revealing of the complexity of power. The case studies presented in this chapter are based upon analysis of the research process itself, while the ensuing chapters will explore the power practices in the police organization that are associated with 1) management practices, 2) negotiating identity, and 3) gendered hierarchies.

### **Breaking and entering**

This section will describe in detail the process whereby access to the police organization was negotiated. In addition, each sub-section will illustrate the interplay between research topic definition, the police organization, the researcher, and research subjects. The discussion will take on board Norris's (1993:124) criticism that 'there are few accounts which describe how the studies [observational studies on the police] were conducted, and in particular, how the ethical problems of the field-work were managed'. With this in mind, the following discussion aims to clarify some of the more significant dilemmas and attempts at resolution pertinent to this study.

The examples used in the chapter highlight a number of themes already developed and which will be pursued in later chapters, namely that: 1) the nature of the police organization is significant in shaping a study of power; 2) that a critical and theoretically informed perspective on power is analytically extremely informative in the context of the police organization; 3) while the researcher may have a great influence on the course and definition of the study, there are features of police organization and practice that exist independently of the researcher; 4) the interactions between researcher and those researched nevertheless provide essential emergent data; and 5) ignoring the existence of these interactions leads to less rigorous analysis of the data.

Access negotiation will be considered in three chronological phases, namely, gaining access, regaining access, and maintaining access.

### *Gaining access*

The process of negotiating access to a police force for the purposes of this study had its roots in an earlier piece of research. This initial small scale research was conducted in 1993, as part of the requirements for an M.A. degree (Keith, 1993). While the research findings presented and discussed in this thesis are based on a different set of interviews and interactions, it is necessary and informative to describe the negotiation of access in its entirety. This chapter will argue that from the first moment of contact with a police force the process of data generation and collection was set in motion. Each interaction subtly shaped the way in which the next contact was phrased, providing early clues as to the sensitivity of a number of topics in the police force.

The first example of this was in response to a telephone request to the Personnel and Training Department of a force close to the home of the researcher. This was a so-called cold call, as the researcher had no existing links with any police officers or forces. The Superintendent responsible for training and personnel matters was asked whether he would meet the researcher to discuss the possibility of conducting research on equal opportunities in the police service. His reply was instant, and discouraging. He suggested that this was a particularly sensitive topic within the force at the time, and that this particular force had participated in an internally funded study on equal opportunities (published later as Anderson, Brown & Campbell, 1993). It was encouraging that he suggested the researcher might wish to pursue access to that data for the force. However, it was becoming clear that gender and equality of opportunity might not prove a productive research route into the police organization.

A similar telephonic approach to the personnel department of a different force produced an even more direct influence on the definition of research topic. The Chief Superintendent [male] in charge of personnel and training in this force suggested that the topic of gender relations was a 'minefield' in the force, as a consequence of the aforementioned internally commissioned study. He suggested the researcher make contact with the Inspector who was nominally in charge of equal opportunities issues. While it was clear that this strategy of his was intended to pass the problem on to somebody else, it proved invaluable in continuing the quest for access to the force.

The nominated Inspector proved to be an important point of entry into the organization. By this stage the research project was presented in terms of investigating some of the many changes taking place in the management and organization of the police force, as a consequence of the negative responses to suggestions of researching gender equality. The research design was being considered at a time when police forces throughout the country were under the scrutiny of the Sheehy Inquiry into pay and conditions in the police organization (Sheehy, 1993). At the time there was much speculation about impending changes to the management of the police service. Within this broader framework of change research, gender relations could legitimately remain a research priority, without closing off access to the organization.

The Inspector in question agreed to a meeting to discuss the research. At this stage the relative status of the different ranks to police officers was not fully understood by the researcher, although she was aware that the differentials between ranks might be marked. Lee (1993:122) helpfully suggests that researchers *are* able to engage in effective research despite the impossibility of experiencing the 'specificity of new situations' in advance. They do so by relying on apprehension of situations 'in their generality'. In time, after some exposure to the organization, the researcher understood that the Chief



Superintendent's recommendation served as a constraint to the Inspector, whose choices were limited by an ambiguity surrounding the request. Based on the little information available to the Inspector, it was *possible* that the researcher already had the support of the Chief Superintendent, although this was not intentionally stated or omitted. The role of the Chief Superintendent, in relation to the research request, remained ambiguous, and the Inspector did not ask for clarification. In practice, the Inspector responded by assuming that an order had been given, and that the meeting with the researcher had been sanctioned by the more senior officer. The Inspector did not want to appear to be operating outside the information loop, and could safely abdicate any responsibility for agreeing to a meeting by deferring to the nominal involvement of the Chief Inspector. This instrumental and self-protective approach to the hierarchy of command provided a useful mechanism through which the officer could take action, without taking full responsibility for any unforeseen consequences. This interaction provided a useful introduction to some of the complexity surrounding the mechanics and interrelationships between hierarchies, actions, and consequences, of which more will be said in later chapters.

The intention in meeting with the Inspector was to ask him / her to act as the contact person when dealing with the force. This was an important step in gaining access, because it was through the Inspector that the necessary access to the Chief Constable would be negotiated, and through whom useful information on organizational protocol would be gleaned. For example, it was through the Inspector that the researcher recognized the importance of, and identified the appropriate way in which to address the Chief Constable. Furthermore, it was useful to be able to use the Inspector's name in the formal application to the Chief Constable. The intention behind this strategy was to be able to present the Chief Constable with a request for access, and at the same time describe a mechanism through which contact between the force and the researcher could be managed, with minimal effort on his behalf.

The loosely defined concept of change in the police service was a useful way of defining the research objectives, and would prove to be acceptable throughout the first and second research projects. As the initial approach to this force was made at the time that the Sheehy Report (1993) was due to be published, the climate in the organization was one of great uncertainty and rumors abounded about the impact this report would have on the terms and conditions of employment in the police service. Rumoured to be under particular threat were the ranks of Chief Inspector and the existing retirement agreement, under which officers could retire after thirty years of service on a full pension. Also mooted was the possibility of introducing performance related pay into the police (e.g. Sheehy, 1993). In this context, a loose definition of the research topic as broadly to do with change was acceptable to the organization, and more importantly perhaps, to the interviewees, many of whom expressed frustration at having their views ignored by the Sheehy report. The unspecified nature of the topic enabled the researcher to include a broad range of topics for discussion during the fieldwork interviews.

The broad definition of topic succeeded as a negotiation tool, but at the same time created tensions of emphasis within the initial study. In part due to the smaller scale of the first study, the interviews revealed useful, if limited, insights into gender relations, and some of the basic elements of appraisal practices (Keith, 1993). Of greater use to the present study was the opportunity to interview 25 Sergeants and Constables at different stations and performing a variety of duties. This exposure proved to be the crucial mechanism through which the researcher became acquainted with the police organization, in terms of organizational structure, culture, and operating context. This knowledge proved invaluable in the conceptualization of the larger study reported in the body of this thesis.

The request for the initial research access was written on paper bearing the letterhead of the Business School. This was an intentional strategy in gaining acceptability as the

police service operate in an increasingly managerialist mode. Budgets and bottom lines increasingly set the limits within policing which operations and modes of organization are decided and executed, as outlined in earlier chapters. After a meeting with the Assistant Chief Constable of the force, during which the importance of anonymity for participants was agreed, access to interview and observe officers was granted, and the MA research was carried out during the summer of 1993.

The groundwork for future access had been laid during these early stages of contact. The subject of further access was broached with the Deputy Chief Constable at the start of 1994.

### *Regaining access*

The intention of the larger second study, reported in this thesis, was to explore theories and practices of power and control as they were reflected in the practices and relations of the police organization. As earlier chapters have shown, definitions and understandings of power are varied and often contradict each other in terms of the fundamental assumptions and explanatory devices. One of the purposes of this study was to consider the empirical example of the police organization as a means of further exploring these theoretical approaches to power.

The variety in theoretical approaches to understanding power presents a problem in terms of representing and defining the purpose of the research to the organization and potential participants in the study. This complexity of definition reflects the practical problems associated with researching a sensitive topic (e.g. Lee, 1993; Brannen, 1988) such as power. The question arises: how should power be researched? The approach adopted during the practice of this research will be outlined below.

In practice this led to a dual approach, whereby the researcher defined the research topic differently for self and other consumption, for a number of interrelated reasons. From the researcher's perspective, one of the purposes of the study was to critique competing theories of power in the light of data from a police force. A single neat definition of power was therefore not necessary as a starting point. From the perspective of the organization, an overly theoretical study might not have been given much credibility. And, in addition, one of the intentions of the study was to explore a *range* of practices of power. Early and explicit definition might have proved overly limiting. After a number of discussions with gatekeepers during the early phases of the initial study, it became clear that the police would be interested in a study that was practical in focus and intent. As suggested earlier, the force welcomed an approach under the banner of the business school, rather than a social science department, as the latter were seen to be 'airy fairy' [Male Chief Superintendent].<sup>1</sup>

In order to maintain the access that was developing, the research was presented as an investigation into the many changes to the management of the police organization. This apparent duplicity raises ethical questions about openness in the research process, and the relationship between researcher and research participants. A number of related issues have been addressed specifically in relation to feminist research methodology, and it is to some of these examples that the discussion now turns. Roseneil (1993) links two of the central tenets of feminist research methodology. She supports the 'rejection of "value-neutrality"' in research. Consequently, research gains a 'liberatory purpose' (p. 179).<sup>2</sup> At

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<sup>1</sup> Even at this early stage in the empirical research process it was becoming apparent that 'knowledge' is embedded in, and part of, power practices, lending early credence to the selection of Foucault's contributions on the power/knowledge interrelationship as a theoretical focus for the conduct of empirical research and later analysis. In this instance, 'management knowledge' is privileged as more significant than 'sociological knowledge', and construed of as quite separate in content and intent.

<sup>2</sup> The 'liberatory project' referred to here is also expressed in broader concerns with an 'emancipatory project' apparent in much social theory.

the same time, she highlights the centrality of reflexivity in research, whereby the researcher is placed on 'the same critical plane as the researched [and]... feminist methodology aims to highlight and examine the role of the researcher' (p. 180). In this epistemological position, all knowledge is seen to be socially constructed, and the researcher plays a key role in the construction of the knowledge produced in the research process. Roseneil (1993) comments at some length on these concerns:

*My most important ethical-political concern has been not to abuse the power of authorship. I felt obliged to point out to the women I was interviewing that I had designed and focused the research largely according to my own interests, and that I retained the power of authorship. I promised to send them a transcript of, at the very least, any sections of their interview that I was planning to quote, in order to check for recording inaccuracies, but pointed out that I would, in the end, interpret it. Getting their agreement to this was a vital part of establishing "informed consent" to the research. (p. 205)*

Central to the aforementioned feminist methodological concerns is a process of equalization, whereby the researcher becomes more transparent to the reader, and, importantly in the context of her study, the research becomes more transparent and available to the researched, for comment and amendment. The importance of trust between researcher and researched is highlighted by Reinharz (1992) as an integral part of feminist research.

Such demands for transparency, and the associated questions of ethical research relations, created a dilemma for the present study which had to be addressed when explaining the purpose of the research to participants.

The experience of the present research suggests the need to question and problematise the feasibility of these attempts when researching the police. Highlighting power as the

principle research topic was judged by the researcher as likely to alter the everyday practices of power which were to be studied. In the interests of researching power practices and relationships, the researcher made an active decision to pursue a broader overt research agenda, that of changes to police organization. She made the judgment at the time based firstly on the reality of her own limited knowledge of the internal workings of the police force, and secondly, because it could broadly be argued that a claim to be studying changes to the management of the force might usefully incorporate power related topics, such as gender relations, competing hierarchical relations, and approaches to managerial control of police and police work.

Green (1993) offers some useful insights into a related ethical and practical dilemma. In considering the relationship between research and Marxist Praxis, she talks of placating the participants in her study of the mineworker's strike when challenged as to her allegiance between the conflicting sides. She achieved this by offering an 'explanation of interest in the whole community and the effects of policing the strike upon it' (p. 111). Researchers do engage in greater or lesser degrees of deception, be it by design, to facilitate access to the data that will inform the research questions, or by default. In the present research, the dilemma was given considerable thought before the decision was made to present a broadly defined topic for consumption by the organization and participants. It is clear that such calculated 'placation' or opaqueness leave little room for participants to contribute directly to the agenda of the research, presented by Reinharz (1992) as one of the objectives in feminist perspectives on methodology. However, it can also be argued that one of the principle aims of the study was to expose and explore the workings of 'gender power' in the police organization. Without the broad definition, the project would have failed, and with it the opportunity to develop understanding of the gendered nature of police organization.

On the basis of the Constabulary's previous experience of the researcher, and with the promise of a limited and brief report for the Chief Constable, access was granted for continued study. The topics for the report were negotiated between the Deputy Chief Constable and the researcher, and were to be limited to Equal Opportunities, Appraisal, Communication, and Quality of Service. It was agreed that officers would be told of the report before they embarked upon an interview. The second, larger study would include more officers, drawn from a greater number of ranks, and would proceed under the broad banner of researching change.<sup>3</sup>

### *Maintaining access*

Throughout the research, the question of researcher independence proved to be a key concern to all parties. At the outset it was necessary to obtain the permission of the Chief Constable to conduct interviews and observation within his Constabulary. The hierarchical nature of the force is such that approval for research access would not have been possible without this sanction. It was necessary to communicate this contact and sanction repeatedly, in particular when approaching an area sub-station commander for permission to select and interview officers. The in-principle support of the Chief Constable was essential in gaining this more localized access, and then again when asking officers if they would agree to participate in the study. Permission from the top of the hierarchy sent the signal that agreement to participate was sanctioned, and not dangerous or deviant behaviour. Officers could, theoretically, rest assured that they were not likely to be 'punished' for their participation, and conversely, that they had the discretion to refuse to be interviewed.

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<sup>3</sup> A breakdown of number of interviewees by sex and rank has purposefully not been included in the appendices as such details might compromise the anonymity of respondents, particularly the minority of senior women officers, and indeed, very senior male officers.

However, this sanction from above was a double-edged sword. When the research process reached the interview or observation stage, the researcher then had to engage in explicit practices in order to distance herself from the formal hierarchy. It was necessary to engage actively in a strategy of maintaining access at the vital level of participant trust. As Wax (1982:41) summarizes: the 'conduct of a successful study requires not merely passive assent to the project, but the active cooperation of some of the members of the community'. The introductory ten minutes of most interviews were devoted to explaining the researcher's independence from the management hierarchy in particular, and from the police organization in general. Officers were given the opportunity to ask for clarification about anything to do with the research. They were also invited to interrupt the process at any point to ask for clarification, or terminate the interview. For the purposes of this study, officers were told explicitly that the force had requested feedback on four topics: equal opportunities, appraisal, quality of service, and communication. They were also explicitly invited to make use of the interview as an opportunity to communicate their views on these matters to headquarters. This invitation stopped short of creating expectations of what Glazer (1982:50) calls 'advocacy' of the participants' cause, but it was intended to be a means through which the participants could contribute to the study in some way that might be meaningful to their working lives. An extract from one interview illustrates this point:

*So would that be useful feedback for me to give to the force, in a very general sense? I'm always very careful to check if someone says something specific that they actually would like something like that reflected [Interviewer].*

This latter strategy was an attempt to limit the imbalance between researcher and subjects, and to remind participants that there was no formal association or connection assumed between the research and their command hierarchy. In this example, the



researcher is communicating on at least two levels. She is checking actual content and interpretation, while communicating neutrality and trustworthiness.

Many of the officers who agreed to be interviewed expressed concerns as to what would become of the data once the interviews were complete. More specifically, interest, and some concern, were expressed as to what would be 'done' with the data. They were told that the force would receive a brief summary of some of the general findings in the four nominated areas only. These findings would be presented in such a way as to protect all individuals concerned. They were also told that the data would be used to inform the write up of this academic thesis. The independent status of the research and the institution the researcher represented were all significant factors in gaining the trust of the participants in the research, one example of which being that the research was not funded by the police or the Home Office, but by the Economic and Social Research Council.

### **Research mechanics**

The research was conducted in a small rural force, which is one of 43 forces in England and Wales. In-depth interviewing and non-participant observation were the key mechanisms for eliciting data in the force. The participants were all to be uniformed officers in the force as the scale of the study could not accommodate civilian staff at the same time. The Constabulary is divided into five geographical areas, each commanded by a Superintendent (see Appendix E for rank structure). It was politically necessary to approach each in turn by telephone, explaining the research purpose and requesting their support in light of the continuing support being offered by the Chief Constable and Assistant Chief Constable. Forty five officers were formally interviewed during the course of the study, and approximately ten other officers engaged in informal conversation at some length during the course of the study, some of whose brief

comments are reflected in this thesis. For the formal interviews, the researcher selected officers from different ranks, in order to cover a variety of police tasks and experience.

Shift rosters indicated which officers would be available for interview, and a semi-random selection<sup>4</sup> of officers was made ensuring that the selected sample contained both males and females and that the lengths of service of the selected individuals covered a wide range. The Resources Sergeants at each of the geographical areas became a vital link in the interview process. Through time constraints the researcher was forced to rely on these officers, who schedule the duty rosters, to contact the officers on behalf of the researcher. The Resources Sergeants then explained to the individuals that the research was independent, and would focus on change in the police service. It was to be stressed that the interviews were voluntary, and that the information would remain anonymous. Where officers were unexpectedly unavailable, through work demands on the day, the Resources Sergeants had been provided with a number of additional randomly selected names to avoid the possibility of an individual being selected by the organization. It was also important to avoid any complications arising from relying on volunteers, and the bias associated with volunteer samples.

At the start of each interview the purpose of the study and the credentials of the researcher were made clear. Anonymity concerns were addressed, and officers were informed of the brief report that would be prepared for the force. Each officer was reminded of the four topics that would be reflected in that report, and were invited to indicate views they would like included in that report.

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<sup>4</sup> Random selection had two purposes. The first was to communicate anonymity to those officers' selected for interview. It was necessary to be able to tell them they had been randomly selected by the researcher, and not volunteered or appointed by anyone in the organization. The second purpose was to ensure that a range of types of work, lengths of service, and both sexes were included, rather than focusing on one sub-group in an organizational culture said to be characterized by strong sub-group loyalties.

Each interview began with 'ice-breaker' questions about the officer's own career history, on the basis that asking questions about the familiar puts respondents at ease, and indicates their centrality to the research process. Subsequent questions were aimed at investigating their experiences of police work, of management policies and practices, such as recruitment, appraisal, promotion decisions, work allocation, and relationships between colleagues (see Appendix F for interview schedule).

The interviews lasted an average of one hour, with a few lasting only 45 minutes, and some up to 2 hours. Each interview was conducted in private; mostly in an interview room, or in the staff club. Officers were interviewed during their working hours, and at the station at which they were based.

Unfortunately, the opportunities for non-participant observation were more limited than had been hoped for and agreed to at the outset. One primary reason for this was the limited numbers of officers on each shift, sometimes as few as two or three, never more than seven or eight. It was rare to find more than two officers working together at any time, and this meant that opportunities for observing groups of officers were severely limited. This was disappointing, as it had been anticipated that group interactions during the course of normal duties would provide illuminating details about social and hierarchical relations in the organization. Where possible, individual officers were accompanied on the beat, or in police vehicles, or on duty in the Custody area. All the recorded interviews were fully transcribed, and the researcher kept notebooks of field observations.

Of the forty five officers interviewed, only three declined to be tape recorded during the interview, all three of whom were women Constables. Two women officers declined to participate at all. This reserve highlights the issue of vulnerability of subjects, and the extent to which participation, or refusal to participate, might pose a threat to their position within the organization. It is possible

that as members of a visible minority in this predominantly male environment they anticipated some form of exposure and / or sanction, despite assurances of anonymity. The researcher adopted the view that it was better for these women to set their own limits on participation, in recognition of the reality that some unwitting revelation of individual identities may be inevitable if the data were to be fully analyzed and written up. The research is at one level intended to produce analysis for public consumption, and it would be unrealistic to treat contributions as 'secrets' not to be repeated.<sup>5</sup> Gaar Johnson (1982:71) points to some of the responsibilities inherent in publishing research, in which she includes: 1) potentially upsetting research participants; 2) attracting publicity unwanted by participants; 3) providing information about respondents that might be exploited inappropriately against their interests; 4) embarrassing the respondents' organization; and 5) the wider responsibility of any researcher to the research community at large. If officers have a negative experience of research on one occasion, they are less likely to participate in future studies. The small group of women who exercised their right to limit the form of their participation, or to refuse to participate, were perhaps anticipating some of these consequences of indiscretion, or indeed ordinary data analysis by the researcher.

Just as it was important to encourage openness and co-operation at the start of the interviews, it was essential to bring the discussion to a close in such a way to re-iterate reassurances of anonymity. On many occasions during the study, once the tape recorder had been turned off at the closure of the interview, the informal discussion focused on the safety of the tape itself. In some cases officers expressed concern at having

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<sup>5</sup> Concerns to protect the anonymity of particularly visible officers in the force (for example, the relatively few women and ethnic minority officers, and senior women officers) have had a significant influence on the presentation and analysis of the data in the chapters that follow. Thematic presentation of data means that data from multiple sources are presented in one theme, and individuals are less likely to be identifiable. While protecting individual anonymity, one negative consequence of this approach is that the data often reflects *accounts of practices* rather than *practices per se*. It is often more interesting to present the details of a single case study (person). This was sometimes sacrificed in order to protect anonymity.

communicated more during the interview about their experience of being a police officer and part of the police organization than on any other occasion. Whether this meant ever, or within the confines of their working lives is not relevant. They were communicating the trust they had placed in the researcher, and expressing a realisation of the potential vulnerability they had brought upon themselves as a consequence. It was important to manage this closure phase, in an effort to maintain a positive 'grapevine' for the on-going negotiation of access, about which more will be said below, and to do justice to the individuals who participated in the study. The section that follows explores some of the dilemmas of control with which the research process is invested.

## **Gathering evidence**

### ***Interviewing context***

Cassell (1982) makes the point that the context of research is often not entirely under the control of the researcher. This proved to be of particular significance in terms of the settings for many of the interviews conducted for this study. A significant feature of conducting interviews and observations in a police force is the extent to which those are also activities in which officers engage during the normal course of their duties. The process of conducting interviews is part of many aspects of police work and police organization. Interviewing is bound up with the practice of evidence gathering, a significant theme of the research that will be further developed in later chapters. Interviews are conducted by officers in order to elicit information from suspects and witnesses to crimes and incidents. In this context, it is the officers who ask questions, and they remain in a directive, authoritative role throughout the process. The aim of those interviews is inevitably to obtain information, which the interviewee may or may not wish to divulge. In essence, officers are more or less skilled in the art of interviewing, and more or less experienced in the practice of interviewing. Under these circumstances

officers are accustomed to setting the pace, content and tone of an interview. This capacity to direct and command a minimum of compliance from the public during an interview is derived from the legitimate position they hold by virtue of being a police officer, invested with the trust, symbolism and authority that goes with being employed by the Royal head of state. The right of the police force to investigate, question, probe and confront witnesses and suspects is taken for granted by officers. The police interview is structured to be an event during which the individual police officer, acting within the guidelines and limitations of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984), is able to 'be in control' of events.

Interestingly, since the introduction of the recent Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994), interviewees have a weakened right to silence when interviewed by the police. Silence during an interview can be used in evidence against them during court proceedings. In effect, weakening the right to silence enhances the control which interviewing officers have over the interview process. The police and the criminal justice system assume the right to interpret silence, to impute meaning onto silence. The potential consequences for interviewees of non-co-operation are more sinister than prior to the Act, and thereby increase the potential for police officers to exercise control over the interview process.

The symbolism that accompanies the research interview in the police organization is coloured not only by these notions of police 'power over' the community and interviewees, but are further complicated by the intensive use of interviewing as a mechanism of organization within the force. The interview is used extensively during recruitment and selection procedures, and for the purposes of promotion decisions. In both of these contexts the officer being interviewed is on the receiving end, operating on the relatively powerless side of the interview equation. In this context, the interviewee is

invited to perform and conform to a partly known and partly unknown agenda, as interpreted by the interview panel. The interviewee is dependent on the interviewers for a favourable outcome. While an unfavourable outcome might not necessarily be interpreted as failure by the interviewee, it is an expression of the ineffectiveness of the interviewee's capacity to exercise influence over the panel, and the contrasting effectiveness of the interviewer's capacity to exercise their will.

Officers are also exposed to the threat, and sometimes the actuality, of a disciplinary interview. A number of officers made the point that such an internal interview has negative connotations because of associations between disciplinary procedures and interviews. On a number of occasions, officers made a direct connection between the threat of being disciplined and punished for some organizational misdemeanor, and the prospect of being interviewed themselves. On a few occasions these connections were made explicit during the opening phases of the research interview, as exemplified in Case Study 2 below. In response to such concerns, it was necessary to highlight yet again the independence of the research and the researcher from the police command hierarchy. Once again the interview procedure is marked by the negotiation and re-negotiation of symbolism and meaning.

Despite the many parallels between interviewing for research and interviewing in the context of police work, one major difference must be noted. The greatest difference between the two information gathering processes is that of power. When interviewing suspects or informants, the police have a range of coercive powers which they can invoke in order to encourage participation. The researcher, however, is in a less powerful position, having no formal authority in the organizational hierarchy, and no means to enforce participation. Yet, it is perhaps this relative *powerlessness* and lack of authority

to command participation that reminds officers of the differences between research and police investigative work, and of the independence of the researcher.

Under constant re-negotiation was the researcher's status as a relative insider and an outsider<sup>6</sup> (e.g. Sheptycki, 1994; Brown & Waters, 1993; Punch, 1979; Gold, 1958). At times it was necessary to be one rather than the other, 'more of an insider' rather than a complete outsider. The previous study (Keith, 1993) provided much needed insights into the organizational realities, which informed these decisions. A contradiction inherent in this research process is that some knowledge of the inside was necessary before it became feasible to negotiate this switching process, from more of an organizational insider, to organizational outsider, and *vice versa*. It was only once the significance of hierarchical differences became apparent to the researcher that this 'role switching' appeared important.

A further significant echo of organizational procedure and symbolism was a consequence of the decision to request permission to tape record the interviews. A feature of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) is that all interviews between police officers, suspects or witnesses have to be tape recorded. The rationale behind the introduction of this surveillance was that the interests of the public would be protected, against possible miscarriages of justice on the part of the police. The implication was that prior to the introduction of tape recorded interviews, police officers were able to abuse their interrogation powers, resulting in, *inter alia*, forced or falsified confessions from

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<sup>6</sup> Young (1993) states that as a serving police officer, his anthropological study of police culture in enhanced by his status as an insider, with ensuing access to that which the outsider cannot see. Yet, in acknowledging the differences in cultures according to hierarchical rank, Young seems to be saying that even insiders have only qualified access and information. In his earlier work (Young, 1991:25) also makes the case for the insider researcher, claiming that the 'sub-languages' and undercurrents that operate in the police organization would be impenetrable to the outside researcher, even during participant observation. The present research, fully aware of these constraints, considers the language and practices that officers are prepared to display to the outsider. In these everyday, apparently acceptable communications, lie interesting insights into the police organization.



suspects. The introduction of taped interviews could be viewed as a mechanism through which to protect the public from intimidation. At the same time, it could also be said to offer police officers protection from accusations of abuse, providing evidence in an organization in which evidence is highly important. Already at this early stage of the research, the evidential climate of the police organization was having an influence on the research, and the multiple meanings of evidence were beginning to emerge.

All of the officers were asked whether they would prefer the interview not to be taped. This option does not have the same implicit freedom of choice as asking them whether they would prefer to be interviewed on tape or without a tape. In one sense the latter might have created an uneasy interview atmosphere. In effect, it would have meant making explicit the potential for interviews to be used against the officer by highlighting the potential for abuse of the information held on the tapes. The offer of not taping the interview was made in the hope that officers would offer their cooperation and agree to be taped. The offer was also made as a means of developing some trust between the interviewer and the interviewee. The request to allow taping was phrased in such a manner as to imply that the tapes enabled the researcher to double check research material at a later stage for accuracy of recollection, in effect offering the interviewee some peace of mind that their words and thoughts would not be knowingly misinterpreted and misrepresented through carelessness. However, they might also have had some reservations that their criticisms and comments might also have been disclosed to others entirely *accurately*.

The interviewer had clearly learned the value and symbolic significance of evidence gathering within the force, in terms of its duties and its organization. This 'insider' information was invaluable in shaping and re-shaping perceptions of the interviewer as an independent outsider, while using knowledge of the organization to navigate the

interview relationship. Gaining permission to record interviews drew upon accumulative knowledge of explicit police procedures and implicit practices. In effect, the research process was being shaped and maintained through these initial symbolic exchanges and interactions.

The decision to tape record the interviews for the present study was taken partly to encapsulate as much detail from the interviews as possible, but also in response to some of the organizational requirements of the research. One concern voiced by the Assistant Chief Constable was that officers' duties be disrupted as little as possible, and that interviews be organized in such a way as to involve little overall disruption to divisions and units. In practice this translated into conducting up to four interviews on a given day, and up to twelve interviews in one particular week. The interview stage of the present research was conducted over a period of six months, in early 1994, and further contact with the force was maintained for a further twelve months. Tape recording the interviews offered the most effective way of retaining the detail of these interviews.

In many instances circumstances dictated that interviews for the study be conducted in a so-called Interview Room in various stations. This setting and its associations for officers with interviewing suspects inevitably reinforced the already mentioned symbolism surrounding the interview as police tool for gathering evidence. In addition, the use of a tape recorder to record the interview in these rooms is an even more direct echo and replication of police interviewing procedures. Many of the interviews for this study were conducted in these rooms, under material conditions that provided inevitable replications of police work, in this case, placing the officer in the 'informant's' seat. A number of officers commented on the irony of this situation, some even suggesting that the interviewer make use of the sophisticated tape recording equipment used by police during interviews.

While these echoes of police work and intention may have created negative connotations for some officers, they were, on the other hand, familiar with the potential for being protected by taped interviews. They could not be accused of saying anything not recorded on the tape. A number of officers pointed this out during the introductory few minutes of the interview, during which they were asked whether or not they would agree to the interview being recorded. The question that begs to be asked as a consequence of this is just how open would officers be prepared to be during taped interviews. If their views were to be recorded in this evidential climate, it must be acknowledged that responses might be measured against the potential for their 'evidence' to somehow be used against them.<sup>7</sup> Glazer (1982) elaborates on this point:

*... the issue of vulnerability becomes even more explosive in a highly politicized environment where providing information can have serious and sometimes unforeseen consequences. When prospective respondents feel vulnerable to violent retribution for speaking to researchers, researchers will be rejected until they are labeled as non-threatening outsiders by all concerned (p. 55).*

It could be said that this is true of all situations, that the interviewer, despite reasonable probing, can never be thoroughly certain of the depth and honesty of a response to any question. In the case of police officers as interview subjects however, this problem could be said to be amplified, as will be illustrated in particular in Case Study 2 below.

Many of the officers who participated in the study made clear that they had valued the opportunity to air some of their own views on the organization. This exploration of the

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth reiterating that the vulnerability of highly visible subjects, like the very few senior women officers [Sergeant and above], remained a methodological problem during the analysis and write up of the research. In the case of the most visible minorities in the force [senior ranking women, those from ethnic minorities] even thematic presentation may not be sufficient to protect their anonymity. Some data has explicitly been excluded from the analysis, on the basis that the cost to the individual officer [greater exclusion and isolation in the organization, or further racial and sexual harassment and victimization] that might ensue, is not justifiable.

similarities and differences between research interviewing and some of the daily tasks of police work is intended to make explicit some of the problems that might arise during fieldwork in this context. Similarly, it is necessary to accept that in an organization with such an explicit command hierarchy, participants might be cautious in talking about their organization to an outsider. However, despite these potential limitations, the data that emerged during and surrounding the interviews provides useful insights into the workings of power and control in the police organization.

The cases that follow outline a number of responses by participants to the research process and the researcher. The discussions highlight concerns about information and knowledge, relative or symbolic status and capacity to wield power and influence as 'weapon'. All reflect some form of hierarchical concern and defensiveness in relation to the knowledge generated by and about the research process, be that at the request for interview stage, during, or after the after.

## **Respondents and responses**

### ***Case study 1: negotiating boundaries***

Many of the officers interviewed were likely to have had more experience of conducting interviews than the researcher. This is particularly the case amongst the more senior officers, and the case of one male Superintendent illustrates a number of significant points about the negotiation for control of the interview process itself.<sup>8</sup> The case illustrates the extent to which co-operation is a conditional and tradeable commodity [in this instance the trade off that was attempted by the interviewee was between his candidness (information given) and information received (information received in return

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<sup>8</sup> Morgan (1996:55) draws attention to the adversarial implications of the 'negotiation' metaphor. He is insistent on highlighting the extent to which it is based on rationalistic assumptions, and he argues that negotiation may not be possible for those without power in the unequal hierarchies in organizations. However, the term is indeed descriptive of the interactions described in the following case studies.

for information given)]. The case raises some important questions about the extent to which an interviewer might be compromised by dependence on keeping on-side gatekeepers within the organizational hierarchy. In particular, the strategies of familiarity employed by the Superintendent reveal some of the mechanisms through which control of the interview was asserted, and, the extent to which the accumulative research knowledge located in the head of the researcher is a wealth of knowledge that has potential value to individuals concerned.

The Superintendent was in charge of a small sub-station, and the researcher's first contact with him was through his secretary, in order to make an appointment to request his permission to interview officers at his station. Not for the first time the request for permission was backed up by already having the permission of the Chief Constable to conduct research in the force. In effect, the Superintendent did not really have the option of refusing access to officers, but he maintained the capacity to hinder that access by offering compliance rather than co-operation. Once he had agreed to allow the researcher to approach officers in his area of command he also agreed to be interviewed himself, once the other interviews had been conducted. This turned out to be a tactical move on his part. It was made clear to him that the officers could only be interviewed if they could be guaranteed anonymity, and that information from one interviewee could not be divulged to another interviewee, regardless of rank. While he agreed to these principles in the first instance, this proved to be up for negotiation when his actual interview was conducted.

The Superintendent made repeated efforts during his formal interview, to shift the terms of the interviewer / interviewee relationship onto more personal grounds, and made use of the few details available to him to do so. He first made the connection between the researcher's home town and telephone number, and then went to elaborate lengths to

connect himself with that town through relating his experiences there as a mature student. He went about creating an impression of himself as a fellow researcher, familiar with research through the postgraduate course recently completed. He then cited the names of a number of academics at this institution with whom he claimed to have strong personal links. None of this seemed particularly out of the ordinary at the start of the interaction.

As he had suggested during the first meeting that he would be interested in 'discussing' some of the findings after the other officers had been interviewed, he was given the opportunity at the beginning of the interview for clarification questions. He pointedly declined, stating that he would ask questions at the end. The implication was one of an exchange: his co-operation during the interview for information at the end. The researcher made a decision to proceed with the interview as planned, without promising to deliver any information in return, although this may have been assumed. The importance of anonymity was reiterated at this point. Once answering questions about his own career and experiences, the Superintendent was co-operative and apparently candid. However, once the interview was formally over, and the tape recorder switched off, he asked his first pointed question. He wanted to know how both he and his Chief Inspector were viewed by the ranks. The reply he received was that it would be a breach of trust with the other interviewees to answer his question. He made repeated attempts at using the familiarity he assumed he had established at the outset: 'This is me, Thomas [name changed], you are talking to. Not just anybody. You can trust me'. The implication was that this relationship was more than a mere interview relationship, that the researcher and he were colleagues of a sort, and that the researcher was somehow betraying his trust by doubting his integrity. The example is a complex one, in which he deployed gender differences and his greater age in his attempt to 'woo' the complicity of the (younger, female) researcher. This attempt at inverting loyalty, confidentiality, and trust was

intended to privilege his position as an interviewee with rights over the rights of other interviewees.

Knowledge of the everyday practices and opinions of officers lower down the ranks appears to be valuable to the Superintendent, in order that he might recalculate his own 'strategies' and management decisions. This case is an early indication of the importance of knowledge in relation to power in the organization, a theme that will be explored in later chapters. This interest in the knowledge by now accumulated and embedded in the researcher's head suggests a dependence by the Superintendent on these sorts of knowledge for effective action. The researcher, as an outsider, who will leave the organization and play no further continued part in it, presents a unique opportunity for gaining such information without having to engage in the organizational field, with the potential trade-offs, exposure and risk attached. The knowledge embedded in the researcher's head is a potential cost-free form of information.

It was clear from the repeated efforts of the Superintendent to access information gleaned during other interviews that this unspecified knowledge in the organizationally disembodied form of the interviewer was valuable. Had the researcher responded to the question: 'What about the Chief Inspector? How do the troops view the Chief Inspector?' it could have reshaped the way in which she was regarded by the Superintendent and coloured his future dealings with the Chief Inspector. Not divulging such information is a matter of research ethics on the one hand, but also a matter of being aware of the capacity for a researcher to engage in the production and reproduction of organizational knowledge and discourse. The Superintendent might have discarded any answer to his questions out of hand, but on the other hand, more significantly, he may have afforded it a unique importance, assuming the researcher's knowledge to be some form of truth. His repeated attempts to gain information of this sort suggest that he placed significant value

on the knowledge contained in the researcher's head, sufficiently so to use in the formation of his own judgments. He was particularly interested in information relating to Inspectors and the Chief Inspector in his command area. In some ways this reflected his own insecurities at being at a distance from the operational day-to-day running of the area. He was both dependent on these ranks for the smooth running of operations, and did not have their (apparently important) daily contact with officers and their duties. The achievement of an apparently powerful formal position in the hierarchy is not sufficient to secure his effectiveness as a commanding officer. To the contrary, the Superintendent reflects ambiguity about his real authority. His positional power is compromised by his apparent lack certain kinds of knowledge about his own standing and that of other senior officers.

In such cases, roles are reversed. The example provides a number of useful links with earlier theoretical explorations of what might be considered when studying power. In particular, the case exemplifies some of the ways in which an analysis of power is strengthened by paying due analytical attention to the subjectivity of those concerned, often reflected in identity-related concerns, insecurities and ambiguities such as those outlined above. The case suggests that power relations generate and inform insecurities about identity. It also highlights some of the ways in which work place practices inform, and are informed by individual subjectivities, or 'identity work', as Thompson & McHugh (1990) call it.

The researcher in effect becomes a site and source of information which the organization [the superintendent in this case] wishes to mine. The outsider has accumulated a view of the organization, and its individuals and practices, which are a potential commodity, have potential value to this supposedly highly placed figure in the command and control hierarchy. This raises questions about the extra sources of bases for action that a person



in authority might need in order to act, and to react. Knowledge in the form of information might provide clues as to how best to operate. The potential is there for the researcher to become involved in the production and reproduction of knowledge and information. This may happen unwittingly, unintentionally, and may take place irrespective of any actions the researcher might explicitly decide to take in order to avoid or counteract such moves / approaches. The way in which the interviewer becomes entwined in the prevailing interview interaction is to some extent unknowable in a general sense. This case provides some sense of the researcher being seen as a repository of valuable information, which could be used and useful if extracted, and the significance of the researcher as a more or less willing producer and reproducer of organizational knowledge. This knowledge appears to have some measure of value in that it is, in a sense, tradable as a commodity in this negotiation over willingness to be interviewed, to cooperate with interviewer. His response to non-disclosure from the researcher, despite his questions and his expectations, was to down-play his interest in the detail of how other officers were viewed (and himself) , and to re-emphasize the importance of his hierarchical authority.

### ***Case study 2: negotiating distance***

Each station presented a slightly different climate in terms of the freedom with which officers interacted with the researcher when in the passing presence of more senior officers. At the start of a series of interviews at a particular station the researcher would have very little 'inside information' in terms of the local climate and culture. After a few interviews and meetings with officers at a station, some of the key influencing factors and people would have emerged. This case will be used to illustrate the potential for this 'inside knowledge' to affect choices in the selection of research subjects, and to inhibit the freedom of the researcher to pursue an independent course of action within a growing body of 'insider information' as the research progresses. The case illustrates a

phenomenon that might border on 'going native', but is used instead to highlight the need for communicating and maintaining and managing clear boundaries between the researcher and subjects. In order to maintain these, it is necessary to examine carefully the source of threat to those boundaries.

After the preliminary introductions were complete, the Sergeant being interviewed asked a few insistent questions about the purpose of the interview, and the relationship between the researcher and the Chief Superintendent at the station. After the standard reassurances of anonymity and independence of the research, she requested that the tape be switched off. Once again she repeated her query about the likely destinations of the interview data, citing previous experiences with members of the press who had promised anonymity, but had failed to deliver on those promises. After further reassurances of anonymity, she was prepared to begin the interview, and agreed to be tape recorded. As the interview progressed, she relaxed and participated freely, offering many opinions and general criticisms of the organization in response to the questions put to her. However, she asked for the tape to be switched off once again when questioning turned to the specific nature of relations between the ranks in the force.

At this point she wished to make it quite clear that her hesitation at participating openly and honestly, and at being recorded, were a direct outcome of her fear of the consequences should any of her comments be leaked to the Chief Inspector at the station. She warned the researcher in unequivocal terms that the consequences of any critical comments being leaked to the Chief Inspector would be dire: 'Take my word for it, there would be a witch hunt until it was found out who had said anything critical'. As the interview proceeded, she cited examples of the ruthless actions which she attributed to the Chief Inspector, making repeated efforts to reinforce the extreme risk she was taking by participating in the interview. At the end of the interview the Sergeant warned the

interviewer of the dangers of leaving any of the interview tapes lying unattended, explaining that the Chief Inspector would not hesitate to search the researcher's briefcase and handbag in order to find the tapes, and listen to recorded interviews. The knowledge gained and recorded during the interviews clearly had some value as currency within the organization, and this reinforced the responsibility of the researcher to operate in a confidential manner.

After the first interruption to the interview, the researcher mentioned to the Sergeant that it was her intention to request an interview with the Chief Inspector. This was done with the intent of gaining the 'permission' of the Sergeant to proceed with this plan, and to maintain a level of honesty of intent and purpose in the research process. It was necessary to ensure a freedom to move within the organization as dictated by the needs of the research, rather than the limitations that would ensue over-involvement with organizational politics. It was becoming clear by this stage that at least some of the negotiation of acceptance of the researcher's presence and standing amongst officers was being carried out by those officers already interviewed. A message of 'she's alright' preceded arrival after the first interviews had been conducted at the station. Had the Sergeant not been informed of this intention to interview the Chief Inspector, the ease with which other interviews were negotiated would in all likelihood have been hindered. The final word of warning from the Sergeant was that the researcher should be wary of the Chief Inspector, as it was likely the interview process would be reversed, and that the interviewer would find herself interrogated. The Sergeant seemed satisfied that her warnings had been heard when the researcher acknowledged that she was somewhat afraid of approaching the Chief Inspector as portrayed by the Sergeant.

It would have been quite easy for the researcher to have been swept into the boundaries defined to be safe by the Sergeant. In the event, the Chief Inspector proved to be a

valuable source of information for the study, despite inherited misgivings on the part of the researcher before requesting the interview. The case illustrates how reflexivity on the part of the researcher can be useful in recognizing and maintaining the necessary boundaries between insider knowledge and outsider's freedom to act, of being informed but not tied by the responsibility that goes with being given insider knowledge.

### *Case study 3: negotiating identity*

One unplanned incident during the research process merits particular mention for the light it throws on managing gendered identities in the research process. In an attempt to reduce reliance on the Resources Sergeant to present the request for an interview on behalf of the researcher, on this occasion he was provided with a letter addressed to each officer in which the purpose of the research was explained in brief. This letter was signed, and a courtesy title of 'Ms' was used. After a ten day wait, the researcher telephoned the Resources Sergeant to assess the response. His reply was that it had been a mistake to use the word 'Ms'. In particular the women officers he had approached voiced their concerns at being interviewed by a 'feminist, left wing, loony, black, lesbian' [male Sergeant]. He explained that he had gone to some lengths to reassure these officers that, having met the researcher, she was 'alright' [male Sergeant].

In practice only one of the three women approached at this station declined to be interviewed. The officer in question was one of only two officers who declined outright to be interviewed, both of whom were women. The researcher considered this a useful indicator that, despite the high rate of participation, it was a real choice for officers to exercise their right to decline to participate. It would have been of great concern had none of the officers exercised this right, as this might have suggested some form of either formal or informal coercion to participate in the study. It was unfortunate and perhaps interesting that the two officers who declined to participate were both woman Constables,

with not much length of service. Three other woman Constables declined to be recorded during their interviews, neither of whom had much length of service in the force. None of the men interviewed declined to be recorded.

Hammersely & Atkinson (1983:84) underline the point that the 'researcher cannot escape the implications of gender: no position of genderless neutrality can be achieved'. Nonetheless, the researcher did engage in definite strategies in order to minimize the impact of her own gendered identity on the research. The research subjects also engaged in strategies through which they sought to understand and impose some control over the researcher. The latter took the form of stereotypical assumptions about the relative youth of the researcher, in combination with her being female. Following Hammersley & Atkinson (1983:85):

*Common cultural stereotypes of females can work to their advantage in some respects. In so far as women are seen as unthreatening, then they may gain access to settings and information with relative ease....[and conversely traditional stereotypes] may limit women's access to particular domains.*

In the present study the researcher presented her own position as that of a student, who would learn from the officers interviewed and observed. Unwittingly, she had adopted a position that was non-threatening to gender hierarchies, and command hierarchies. This *de facto* deference had a direct impact on facilitating access to both the men and the women of the organization. Within this framework, as a 'novice', she was not assumed to pose a threat to individuals positions within the existing status hierarchies, nor was it necessary to take her particularly seriously as a threat to individuals or the organization.

In addition, the researcher was careful to dress in such a manner as to minimize her own sexuality. This strategy was useful in managing relations with officers of both sexes,

minimizing sexual cues in order reinforce a measure of neutrality and harmlessness. Reinharz (1992:58) draws attention to the possibility of young female researchers being defined as a sex object by male research subjects, raising the question of researcher collaboration with these roles. The researcher did experience what Hammersley *et al* (1983:85), drawing on Easterday, Papdemas, Schorr & Valentine (1977), call ‘ “hustling” from male hosts’, despite the attempts to create a relatively neutral physical appearance: trousers, blazers and boots being normal research attire. This choice of clothing in itself was another organizational echo, with the researcher matching to some limited extent the uniformed dress of the police officers with whom she would engage. This ‘hustling’ took the form of humorous flirtation, engineered attempts at being seen with the researcher in public places where other male officers could witness the interaction. On the other hand, many of the male officers adopted a protective, paternalistic stance towards the researcher, for example apologizing for other officer’s use of foul language.

In practice, it is essential that the researcher be aware of the potential pitfalls woven into these stereotypical relations between genders. The researcher did not actively follow the advice of Hammersley & Atkinson (1983:85) that ‘in some circumstances it may be easier for females to present themselves as socially acceptable incompetents’. This may have been a view held by a number of the officer’s being interviewed. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that variables such ethnicity, age and gender *will* influence the type of relationships formed during the research, and these in turn will inform the nature of research access. In the present study, the researcher was from the same (white) ethnic group as 98% of the force being studied, which is not to deny the significance of ethnicity as an organizing principle within the force

Within this context, the casual use of ‘Ms’ on a letter to officers was bound to evoke some resistance. That this resistance came largely from police women suggests that the

officers concerned did not want to be seen to associating with anyone who used the overtly feminist label, in an environment where an overtly feminist identity is seen to compromise relations with male officers. The example suggests that 'mistakes' such as these can reveal illuminating data that might not be glimpsed during the planned stages of the research.

#### ***Case study 4: negotiating independence***

On four separate occasions the Official Secrets Act (1989) was mentioned by participants. The first time it was used by a woman Constable, who cited the Act as the reason that she could not answer many of the questions put to her. In practice this was the only instance in which the Act was invoked consistently as an avoidance tactic. On two other occasions, officers raised the question of the researcher's position with regard to the Act at the interview request stage, or at the beginning of the interview. Both accepted the explanation that the material to be addressed was not covered by the Act, and that the Assistant Chief Constable at the time had not required the researcher to sign any related documents. It was important to avoid any limitations to later data analysis, other than the basic guarantees of anonymity given to all participants. The use of the word 'anonymity' rather than 'confidentiality' also reflects the reality that the material gathered during field-work would at some stage be written up for some degree of public consumption. Anonymity allows the writer more latitude than does confidentiality. After these two interviews were concluded, both participants remarked that they had not been required to cover any topics that were in contravention of the Official Secrets Act.

The fourth instance in which the Act was mentioned proved to be particularly interesting. The Inspector in question raised the issue for the first of many times when contacted by telephone to ask for his participation in the study. Despite being assured that the Act was an unnecessary precaution on his part in the context of the study, he insisted that it should

be signed, and that he would arrange for the relevant forms to be available for the researcher's signature. At the start of his interview some weeks later, the Inspector once again asked about the status of the researcher *vis a vis* the Act, and was visibly annoyed with himself for having forgotten to bring the relevant papers for signature. The researcher had no intention of signing the documents had they been produced, as this could have undermined the independence of the study. However, she did not want to invest the signing of the documents with undue significance in the mind of the Inspector. He agreed to continue the interview at the suggestion of the interviewer that he could decline to answer any questions that might contravene the terms of the Act. With this 'way out' in hand, the Inspector participated fully and vocally in the interview, and no further mention was made of the Act.

In all four instances, the Act was brought into the research process as a mechanism through which the officers wanted to protect themselves and to exercise some control over the interaction. In all instances they engaged in self-defense, fearful of consequences that might befall them if they talked out of turn. The Act provided the hope of protecting themselves: they would agree to be interviewed, but effectively limit what could be reported of the interview by imposing the constraints of the Act on the researcher. The Act provided the possibility of protecting themselves not only from what the researcher might do with their views and participation, but importantly, it provided a bureaucratic shield within the organization. If the researcher could be persuaded to sign the Act, then responsibility for limiting the content of the interview and any subsequent use of the data fell to the researcher, the participant having invoked the protective mantle of bureaucratic procedure.

It was essential for the independence of the study that the researcher did not sign any forms related to the Act. At the same time, this had to be negotiated in such a way as not



to invest the researcher's disinclination to sign any related papers with undue importance in the eyes of these concerned officers. The researcher judged it in the best interests of free movement within the force to keep references to the terms of the Act to a bare minimum, for fear of their becoming blown out of all proportion. Once more, the direction and shape of the research process was having to take account of the organization, in order to navigate around the hierarchical order and its bureaucratic manifestations of control.

### *Case study 5: negotiating credibility*

Two incidents serve to illustrate the ongoing problem of negotiating credibility in the eyes of research subjects. The dilemma is at least in part a consequence of the hierarchical organization of the police, and the associated distrust. At the end of each interview, the researcher made a point of reminding the participants that they were likely to see her entering or exiting interviews with senior officers at various police stations during ensuing weeks. Each officer was reminded of the researcher's commitment to anonymity. At the same time, the researcher pointed out that no information that revealed any specific details from other interviews had been revealed during the current interview. The point was raised as a means through which the interview could be brought to a close on a note that confirmed to the participant that their trust in the interviewer was appropriate, and that every precaution would be taken to safeguard their contribution and anonymity. It was necessary to anticipate and pre-empt any doubt that might arise in officer's minds on the inevitable occasion of seeing the interviewer with other, and more senior officers. This precaution was taken as a direct result of information gathered during the early phases of the study which indicated a need to treat hierarchy, visibility and anonymity with great care whilst conducting fieldwork. In effect, these precautionary warnings served as a means through which the more undefined and ambiguous spaces of the research could be pre-empted and managed. The interviewer has some capacity

during the interview to set limits, control the timing of events, and offer opportunities for the participants to query or even halt the proceedings. Public spaces such as corridors and waiting rooms offer no such opportunities for researcher intervention, or for concerned participants to impose their will. The need for pre-emptive action proved justified on a number of occasions, when, for example, it was impossible to avoid being seen exiting a Chief Inspector's office, at a moment when the officer in question was engaged in animated and humorous discussion with the researcher. It was quite clear from the faces of officers in the corridors that this was a noteworthy event, about which a number of them passed knowing glances to one another, although all other conversation in the corridors ceased.

A different example of losing researcher control in an undefined space is one that took place in the officer's relaxation lounge. This is what Goffman (1959) would call a backstage venue, where officers take rest breaks, watch television, keep tea and coffee supplies, and informally interact with one another. On two occasions the researcher was shown to this type of room, to wait for an officer to arrive for interview. On one hand this could be seen as indication of some degree of acceptance by officers, an invitation into their more private space, where talk was of sport, time off, weddings, and other officers. On the other hand, this inclusion introduced a reversal of participation expectations. It is possible during interviews, and even during non-participant observation of officers going about their duties, to maintain a large degree of control over the direction of discussion. The mutually shared, and tacitly agreed, expectation is that the interviewer asks the questions, and the participant talks. In these backstage venues, however, there was an expectation that the researcher should participate in the discussion. Even more so, they were used as opportunities to find out more about the interviewer, to ask questions and expect answers. One of the tools of this research was to maintain some measure of consistent presentation of the research and researcher by adopting a reasonably

anonymous position. These undefined spaces provided officers with the opportunity to challenge that practice, and in effect, place pressure on the 'field role' adopted by the researcher (Gold, 1958).

Much of the talk in these backstage areas was to do with sport on television. On two occasions officers asked the researcher which football team she supported. This was a test question, aimed at finding out whether this researcher in their midst truly was alright, as the rumour had been suggesting in the organizational grapevine. It was a test which the researcher had to pass in order to pursue this informal contact with the officers, rather than sit quietly in the corner and watch events. It was unclear how the test could be passed however, as this was at least in part a test of gender boundaries, and professional boundaries. The officers were unclear as to how to relate to this stranger, and a female stranger, in the largely male backroom. This was their domain for being people rather than officers. It was unclear as to whether they should treat the researcher as a person, albeit a female person, or a researcher. The lack of definition created ambiguities on all sides, that had to be managed by all concerned<sup>9</sup>.

## Conclusions

This chapter has argued that the negotiation of research access provides a rich influence on the whole study, and is a source of data in itself. In effect, data generation in fieldwork such as this starts *before* the interviews. As Hammersley & Atkinson (1983:174) note: 'in ethnography the analysis of data is not a distinct stage of the research. It begins in the pre-fieldwork phase, in the formulation and clarification of research problems, and continues into the process of writing up'. The discussion of the echoes of organizational practice and symbolism in the research methodology highlight the complex

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<sup>9</sup> The outcome of this negotiation was that the female researcher made some attempt to sound knowledgeable about football, thus 'playing the game' in an attempt to keep the general conversation flowing.

interrelationships between the organization in question [for example through command hierarchy and gendered relations] and research design. That this research is based in a police organization as opposed to any other is highly influential in terms of methodological choices, meaning and roles available to the researcher. The chapter has illustrated that the researcher and the police organization contribute in significant ways to the definition of the research topic, and the method adopted in the research process.

While the some of the analysis of the fieldwork process suggests that Weberian notions of bureaucratic hierarchy remain influential in shaping power relations and practices in the police organization, it shows some of the ways in which gender, identity concerns, and management practices *also* inform power in the organization. Furthermore, the case studies illustrate the extent to which knowledge, information, and research data were all influenced by the evidential climate of police work. This highlights the problematic and multi-faceted nature of meaning and knowledge, and suggests that a closer look at Foucauldian power/knowledge practices is likely to add considerably to our understanding of the police organization. However, the discussion in this chapter suggests that the power/knowledge concept itself requires some deconstruction in light of the empirical data, that power/knowledge practices are more complex than panoptic surveillance might imply. These themes will be further pursued in the following chapters.

Having set out in this, and earlier chapters, the epistemological and methodological approach of the present research, the ensuing three chapters will consider in some detail the conditions, processes and consequence that inform the everyday power practices in the police organization. The data are drawn from responses to questions about the often interrelated power practices inherent in managerial practices, organizational hierarchies, and gender, and from observation of officers at work.

## Chapter 8

### Policing management

This chapter will critically examine officers' interactions with, and responses to, some of the explicitly managerial practices in the police organization and the still-present hierarchical regime of control. It will also explore the influence that the broader context of police work has on shaping the terms in which officers' responses are defined. The intention of this chapter is to illustrate and explore some of the deeper complexities and paradoxes of the practices that shape management in the police context. The accounts presented in this analysis will explore the ways in which notions of discipline, management, police work, and measurability are mutually shaped and constituted.

The data presented in the these next three chapters will take a close and critical look at officers' interactions with, and responses to, a range of practices that characterize the police organization. The point reflects a number of crucial issues raised in earlier theoretical discussions about how power should be conceptualized, and is deserving of further elaboration. This thesis argues that *individuals' interactions with, and responses to* power related practices in the organization expresses some of the complexity and inter-relatedness of action/structure concerns outlined in earlier chapters. A brief look at some of the implications of *alternative terminology* illustrates some of the important, and associated limitations. For example, 1) 'strategies' by officers places too great an emphasis on rational intention, and many of the practices explored in the data in this and ensuing chapters are not necessarily intentional; 2) 'responses', on the other, might imply too great an emphasis on passive objects at the receiving end of (over) determined and determining structures. Considering officers'

‘interactions with, and responses to’ organizational practices is intended to reflect something of the complex interrelationships between structure and action, objects and subjects, action and passivity, co-operation and resistance.

The empirical analyses that inform the remaining chapters of this thesis will further develop these important themes. To that end, the analysis of the empirical data on management practices in this chapter begins with a critical assessment of the co-existence of traditional militaristic and bureaucratic discipline, and more recent attempts to introduce discipline by means of managerial practices. The data discussed in the second section shed light on the many measurement practices that inform much of police management. The emphasis on measurability is reflective of Weber’s formal goal-rationality, which was about just those sorts of practices, of calculation and measurement. The third section explores the often defensive responses by officers to the present managerial drive for accountability and assessment, and in so doing, develops the analytical point made in earlier discussions about the importance, and influence, of subjectivity and identity concerns in the face of managerial demands.

### **Overt and covert discipline**

It is not surprising that many of the officers referred in their interviews to an old, traditional, hierarchical police force, within which each officer apparently had a clear understanding of the behaviour associated with rank, type of job, and of the police force in general. These claims reflect strongly held, often romanticized, ideas about certainty and predictability in the force during the ‘older days’:

*[There have been] tremendous changes. [The police service was] very much more discipline orientated in the older days. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:2)*

The overt discipline referred to here is that associated with a militaristic, hierarchical

command chain, through which officers were managed, or more accurately, ordered as to how to conduct themselves, both on and off duty.<sup>1</sup> The detail of this discipline was encoded and presented in a highly bureaucratic system of rules and regulations governing acceptable behaviour.<sup>2</sup> A Sergeant, eager to underline the scope of control over officers' public and private lives through organizational regulations,<sup>3</sup> elaborates on this point:

*Up until 12 months ago you had to ask permission to get married, and you had to say who you were marrying. They've only just stopped that. You used to have to ask permission to live somewhere ... This [file of Standing Orders] relates to everything you should do, and how you should do it properly ... this is just something that has come down from the military days when everything had to be written down. (WS, 9 years service, tape 11:13)*

In this example, militaristic and bureaucratic practices are presented as synonymous. Officers often remarked on the passing of the 'military days', and on the subsequent importation of management philosophies more conventionally associated with commercial enterprise.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Emsley (1991:235) is critical of the oft-made claims that the English police have always been 'non-military'. He acknowledges that they were never under the command of a Ministry of War, as in France, and that men [sic] did not enlist for a fixed term. They were, however, organized according to a strict hierarchy, and for the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century were led by former soldiers. Officers were subject to parade ground drill, and sometimes lived in 'barracks'. Boots, belts and buttons had to shine, and uniforms were to be smart at all times. 'Non-military', in Emsley's view, is often used to denote 'unarmed', although the two are not synonymous.

<sup>2</sup> The details of regulation are recorded and circulated throughout the force on a regular basis in the form of Standing Orders, which are to be found in most offices at any of the police stations visited, on hand for reference to the detailed regulation of expected behaviour and procedures to be followed. Standing Orders still form an important part of communicating the details of management policy.

<sup>3</sup> The public / private split between officers' work lives and personal lives is evocative of Goffman's ideas about on-stage and off-stage presentation of selves (Goffman, 1959). Manning (1977:17) in *Police Work* presents a Goffmanesque analysis of police work, in which he argues that 'in their everyday work the police, although they may intrinsically possess great dramaturgical potential, must dramatize the *appearance* of control'. Elsewhere, Hearn (1992) argues that public institutions and the men that run them are becoming increasingly powerful. In his critical analysis of *Men in the Public Eye*, Hearn argues that the complexities that underlie public/private distinctions need to be examined, along with the underpinning assumptions about notions of masculinity.

<sup>4</sup> Skolnick and Fyfe (1993:113) argue that military jargon is apparent in most discussions of the police, and that the military metaphor influences the public perception of policing. Politicians talk in terms of a 'war on crime'. The authors draw heavily on the so-called 'war model' of policing in their investigation of police victimization of Rodney King in the USA. 'When cops go to war against crime, their enemies are found in inner cities and

*Historically we were a hierarchical, rank orientated organization, but at the same time you've got this new breed of police managers, saying we don't necessarily have to be like that, we can be like 3M. (M Supt. 19 years service, tape 43:24)*

This 'new' form of management, is presented as significantly different from the old militaristic discipline, which was based upon obedience to authority and instruction within a clear hierarchy of seniority. Crucially, the new management approach appears to place greater reliance on self-imposed discipline, as is apparent in the following:

*The new [management] system involves a lot more self-discipline than the old system. That was very easy to work, working inside very tight guidelines, the rules were black and white and easy to operate, it's like a prison ... The problem with the present system at the moment is that it's too loose. People in a very tight prison structure know exactly where they're going, but you go into the loose ones and they get into a mess [emphasis added] ... the new system has got a lot of self discipline in it that a lot of the younger [probationary officers<sup>5</sup>] at the training centre can't work out the balance. (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:23)*

It is, however, worth questioning the extent to which the 'tight prison structure' has been replaced entirely by 'loose ones', or indeed, the extent to which the romanticized militaristic system gave the clarity expressed in the above account. Indeed, the capacity for officers to exercise discretion in the conduct of their duties described in Chapter 6 suggests some 'looseness'. The supposed clarity of the prison-like military bureaucracy of old is remembered fondly here as providing direction and security for officers' behaviours. The 'black and white' rules supposedly demarcated expected behaviours, and removed much of

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among our minority populations' (1993:116). Elsewhere Young (1991) elaborates upon the centrality of myth in the re-creation of police culture.

<sup>5</sup> New recruits to the force undergo a two year period of probation and training, during which time their progress, suitability and performance are constantly reviewed. A formal record of performance, the so-called 'Personal Development Profile' (PDP) is used to record, monitor and measure progress during that time. Successful completion of the probationary period marks officers' entry into the force as fully fledged officers. Probationers interviewed were acutely aware that they might not 'make the grade' both formally and informally during those two years.



the responsibility of autonomy and discretion from officers. Indeed and the above reference to a 'prison' reflects Weber's pessimistic view of the so-called iron cage of bureaucracy.<sup>6</sup> Officers are aware that the requirements of the 'new' mode of management places increased expectations of both autonomy *and* accountability on individual officers.

The data revealed often contradictory points of view on the desirability of increased autonomy and self-discipline. One Inspector expressed his derision of that same militaristic 'prison' as follows:

*Over a period of two years of change, every member of staff changed a lot, because they got rid of all the old dinosaurs, and brought in a lot of new, more enlightened people. The old [culture] didn't really take the individual into account much. It's what I call the "sit down, shut up" prat type of training culture. (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:22)*

While the *individualization* of discipline present in this instance is interpreted in a positive light, the example also serves to make the point that self discipline places different demands from those inherent in more collective military-style discipline, laying the responsibility for monitoring behaviour on the individual themselves. Unsurprisingly perhaps, this is not always welcomed. Individualized self-discipline is sometimes criticized. The regimentation of 'old' apparently gave officers' clarity, direction, and perhaps a sense of security arising out of predictability, and being part of a group who together 'survive' tough discipline.

From the perspective of one Inspector, cited below, with responsibility for managing the operational duties of a large group of Sergeants and Constables, the 'new' approach to

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<sup>6</sup> Skolnick and Fyfe (1993:118) observe that, while other professions, such as medicine, and law also operate with great discretion, in the case of the police, that discretion lies at the lowest hierarchical rank. Linked with the discretion officers have in the conduct of their duties, is the proliferation of detailed rules that attempt to provide definitions and limits for actions. Skolnick and Fyfe argue that such definitions are often meaningless in the face of the real discretion officers use in deciding when to intervene, arrest and prosecute in the course of their duties.

management, with its emphasis on self-discipline, offers opportunities for greater management control that were not possible in the military mode. He clearly associates the 'new' approach with effectiveness and productivity. At the same time, his ideas suggest a move away from reliance on coercion and obedience within the chain of command, to an approach that requires compliance, or, in some cases, the more enthusiastic co-operation from officers.

*We are more enlightened in the way we treat people [officers] now. We now realize that to get the best out of people, if we want them to supply a good service to the public, we have to provide a good service to them [officers]. That doesn't mean beating them with sticks, you know, constantly chasing them around. It means being fairly willing to respond to their concerns and their needs. We have some pretty good senior officers who are concerned that that process continues. (MI, 9 years service, fast track, tape 39)*

The 'new' management discourse that is emerging in the organization relies increasingly on a combination of customer service jargon, and the motivational assumptions of the human relations school of thought commented upon in earlier chapters. Organizational discourse is laden with references to management ranks providing 'a good service' to officers, and concern with employees' well-being as a means through which performance can be improved.

The imposition of fixed operational budgets is a second significant feature of the difference between 'old' and 'new' management *modus operandi* in the organization, and the associated language and practice of organizational efficiencies and managerial effectiveness.

*The biggest thing as far as senior management is concerned is having to be made aware of budgets, financing, and financial constraints ... this has only come about in the last five or six years it's really come home to senior management that the police force is accountable, financially accountable. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:4)*

These budgetary constraints are imposed at a local government level through the Police Authority, in response to government and Home Office financial allocations.

*The Home Office has tried to get the police to manage itself better. You can go right back to 1986 when we had "Policing by Objectives".<sup>7</sup> That to me is the Home Office, and the government, trying to force the police into managing itself ... it's a slightly changed title and changed tack a little, but no doubt the Home Office performance indicators is [another] method of trying to drive police management. (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:8)*

Some of the practices directly associated with the imposition of budgetary constraints are explored in the next section. For the moment it is sufficient to highlight the extent to which budget constraints and the discourse of accountability reflect a distinctive process of rationalization, centrally directed and locally implemented. And, far from being limited to financial rationalization, accountability demands have begun to pervade people management as well. Promotions, career development, demands for equality of opportunity are all imbued with demands for accountability. Financial accountability is as much about the imposition of disciplinary processes, as is the overt management of motivation, and career development.

*We've got into a real mess ... about promotions and opportunity and being able to evidence selection and to protect ourselves at a tribunal. We've just got into an awful mess ... it's a running battle, bogged down in bureaucracy. (M Supt. 19 years service, tape 43:22)*

Clearly the police organization is having to appear to be accountable on many fronts - here in terms of promotional opportunities - in order to satisfy a number of audiences, including the public, police officers, and sometimes at Industrial Tribunal. The essential influence here on police management modes is the threat of sanction, in the forms of public opinion, and

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<sup>7</sup> Butler's (1984) text on police management, critiqued earlier, is a prime example of the 'objectives management' discourse referred to in this example.

financial sanctions that might be imposed by a tribunal on the force. The human relations emphasis illustrated earlier seems to be a defensive response to threats of financial sanction and / or exposure to criticism, rather than a particular concern for the well being and development of officers alone. External accountability imposes discipline over the organization.<sup>8</sup>

Terms and concepts clearly associated with the management of business organizations are increasingly the norm in the force. Talk is of Corporate Plans, strategic directions, management styles, effectiveness and performance evaluation, as the following quotes illustrate:

*The Corporate Plan that we've got is probably the nearest thing to a long term, well, strategic approach to planning. (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:8)*

This language is apparent not only at Inspector level ('middle management'), but also amongst some Sergeants, who have day to day supervisory responsibility for the majority of the force.

*At the end of the day if you [as the supervising Sergeant] are not [supervising] in the proper way then they will not perform ... I think its management techniques at the end of the day. (MS, 12 years service, tape 34:11)*

The concern with the 'proper' techniques reflects a technocratic view of management, as a set of tools to be used in defined ways, and with predictable outcomes.<sup>9</sup> Yet, *at the same time* as the increasing emphasis on budget and human relations management, the potential for the

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<sup>8</sup> Knights & Collinson (1987:457) usefully draw on Foucault's insight as to the disciplinary effects of everyday social practices. They argue that financial accounting practices are one example of such a disciplinary technology in modern power/knowledge 'regimes'.

<sup>9</sup> The HMIC document (1996) illustrates the set of assumptions about management tools that, if only 'properly understood', would dissolve intransigence and resistance to their implementation.

exercise of militaristic disciplinary authority remains intact. An Inspector remarks on the capacity to rely upon authority in the event that the more subtle control techniques associated with 'new' management fail.

*My management style is participative, spending a lot of time talking to people because I want people to do things as they want it done. But there's a backstop because we're a disciplined organization. I can say: "You will do that". (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:19)*

It becomes apparent then that the police organization has come to rely on at least two, often competing and contradictory, concepts of discipline: authoritarian militaristic discipline, which requires only obedience, and the more recent requirement for self-discipline, which is dependent at least to some extent on compliance or co-operation on the part of officers. Control through management techniques must co-exist with the potential use of authoritarian commands for obedience. This uneasy coalition of different modes of disciplinary control is highly problematic, in that each sends contrasting messages about expected behaviour, latitude for discretion and possible forms of sanction. Demands for external accountability add to the already confusing disciplinary climate.

In the following two sections, this chapter will further explore some of the often contradictory practices undertaken in the name of management in the police organization, officers' interactions with and responses to these practices, and the influence of police work on the practice of management. The first section explores aspects of performance measurement,

## Management as measurement<sup>10</sup>

A clear perception exists amongst officers that much of the activity surrounding measuring officers' performance against particular indicators is the instrumental consequence of budgetary constraints, rather than concern with quality of service. Financial limitations are set by a number of bodies external to the force itself, which form the external 'audience', for whom performance indicators are collected and collated, in addition to senior ranking police officers in the force itself.

*There's no doubt in my mind whatsoever that the police service will be judged, and different police authorities, will be judged on performance indicators. Judgments about budgets will be taken on the basis of that. It's all to do with money, driving down police costs, and the government saying these are the things that are important. (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:8)*

The devolution of budgetary responsibility to each force marks a significant change in the particular methods adopted in order to manage and impose the process of financial accountability. Responsibility and accountability are consequently located at local force levels, despite the already noted centralization and rationalization that the 'new' management ethos engenders. Local Constabularies are losing autonomy and discretion over modes of organization, whilst gaining responsibility and accountability.

*They are now making Chief Constables responsible for their own budget, responsible for the way they finance their police force. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:11)*

Each of the five geographical areas of the force, under the command of a Superintendent, has

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<sup>10</sup> Emphasis on measurement harks back to the earlier discussion of positivist methodology, in which 'real knowledge' is that which can be measured. Measurement suggests further interesting issues, about the use of numbers to represent human affairs, as exemplified in present day 'success' of numbers- based econometrics over more-socially informed 'development economics'.

its own newly devolved budget, within which limits all conventional operations are to be funded. Financial accountability seems to be most strongly pursued through detailed exercises whereby results and types of police work are constantly recorded and monitored. Results, performance indicators, and measurements are phrases frequently used to describe management priorities and daily activities.

*Performance monitoring ... the sort of phrases that are totted around. They are used by police managers reviewing police performance and I think it's only a small step to reviewing budgetary performance. (MI, 13 years service, tape 42:6)*

As financial accountability is gradually devolved further down the organizational hierarchy, the practices of performance monitoring and assumptions about the connection between measurement and efficiency proliferate<sup>11</sup>.

*We're certainly well down the road in terms of finance, of trying to provide value for money, of being aware of the resources that we have, that we're getting as much as we can from them. That's uppermost in everybody's mind when it comes to planning any kind of operation. (MI, 9 years service, fast track, tape 39)*

Each force, and each divisional area within the force, may be financially accountable, but it is clear that the accountability is accompanied by clear instructions as to what is to be measured (see for example, Appendices A, B and C).

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<sup>11</sup> Skolnick and Fyfe (1993:125) make the point that the police are like all other bureaucracies in their emphasis on measuring the easily quantifiable. Manning (1977) cites officers' frustrations at the profusion of rules governing their actions, the number of rules making it inevitable that these will be broken in the course of everyday job demands. In addition, the point needs making that police officers' work is about both peacekeeping and law enforcement, the former requiring that they exercise discretion and judgement, in addition to enacting the law.

*The Home Office have set some specific guidelines as far as objectives and measurements is concerned. (MI, 25 years service, tape 37:8)*

In practice, the organization is accountable financially and in terms of meeting specified performance criteria. Certain contradictions emerge. The comment below is indicative of some of the criticisms voiced by officers of the apparent disconnection between what is monitored and measured, and day to day police work:

*A lot of the statistics do nothing to assist with the job. All they're there for is to show various bodies and organizations like the government and the Audit Commission ... but it's serving no other useful purpose. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:8)*

Despite such criticism of the dominance of monitoring, and its apparent weaknesses, the language and practices of monitoring, traditionally applied by police officers to the suspects and witnesses in criminal cases, are increasingly focused on the police organization itself.<sup>12</sup> It seems that the increasing emphasis on accountability and measurability have had a significant impact on the culture of the police organization, which would, it was suggested earlier, would take a 'sledgehammer' to change.

The emphasis on monitoring and measuring officers' activities and effectiveness has broadened in its emphasis through a number of practices adopted recently. One such practice in the force has been to place closed circuit video cameras in all the cell blocks.<sup>13</sup> Evidence

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<sup>12</sup> The discussion of similarities and differences between research work and some police work in the previous chapter was an early example of the ways in which meanings from one context colour meanings and understandings in another setting.

<sup>13</sup> The practice of closed circuit television cameras in cell blocks had been extended to all stations in the constabulary by the end of the field-work phase. This indicates the importance attached to visibility, and monitoring that are a key theme in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984. Skolnick & Fyfe (1993) are emphatic in the conclusions of their investigation into the beatings of Rodney King in the United States by police officers, that the use of videotaping is essential in curbing excessive use of force by police. The disciplinary function of visibility is promoted as the chosen mechanism for controlling officers' behaviour. This is a far cry from the self-discipline inherent in human relations management techniques advocated in HMIC (1996). However, as will become clear in this chapter, some of the techniques of 'managerial



of police activity in the cells is constantly gathered. Monitoring of episodic events such as numbers of prisoners detained, is transformed, through the ever-present video camera, into a continuous process of monitoring and surveillance of all activity.<sup>14</sup>

*[Closed circuit cameras in the cell block is ] a force policy really. Every station in the area has got one now. I think it's only fair, it's fair to everybody. It's fair to the prisoners, it's fair to us ... It's the first thing I do when they come. I point out that they're being video taped and generally it quietens them down. It's all on video ... yeah it stops them. (MS, 8 years service, tape 33)*

Curiously, officers and prisoners alike are offered the protection of filmed evidence.<sup>15</sup> It provides the information upon which a defense against allegations of malpractice might be based. At the same time, the very existence of that evidence is intended to discipline the behaviours of those filmed.

While some officers view the paperwork, video recordings and emphasis on evidence and accountability associated with these monitoring practices as protection, others regard the change to their autonomy as unacceptable:

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psychology', are also premised on potentially disciplinary expectations of 'visibility' (e.g. Townley, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> The continuous monitoring reflects directly the spirit of Foucault's interpretation of the Benthamite panopticon, described earlier. The video camera in the cell block reception area both monitors what actually takes place, and influences the behaviours that occur because some authority might observe wrongdoing, and functions as a form a technological panopticism.

<sup>15</sup> The closed circuit cameras are deemed to be quite acceptable in the organization operating as it does within the framework of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984). The Act was introduced as a mechanism through which suspects and subjects could be protected from potential miscarriages of justice at the hands of the police. This was particularly pursued through the detailed specification of procedures to be followed during interviews with suspects, and those surrounding the arrest and detainment of suspects for questioning. One example of the impact of PACE on police work is that interviews with suspects are consequently taped, the intention being to protect suspects from manufactured evidence through the evidence of the tape recording.

*Years ago, we would dictate what we would do. Nowadays, we're so accountable that they [senior officers] tell us what we've got to do, what time we've got to do it in. (MDC, 31 years service, tape 28:10)*

It is interesting to note that the increased emphasis on measurement and monitoring is more positively regarded by officers at the Inspector rank and above, although not all. It is at this level that officers are more likely to engage actively in the discourses surrounding efficiency and effectiveness, and link the attainment of both with the process of measurement.

*I'm trying to develop how we're going to measure our performance. It's actually like a management information board down there, which I've been working on and trying to get everybody behind the fact that you, we are being measured. You know, we need to look at our performance ... and sort of drive it, if you like ... setting directions. Then, through all sorts of lines of consultation, liaising with Sergeants and PCs actually, if you like selling that steer to them, then making sure they go away and move in that direction. (MI, 13 years service, tape 42: 8)*

It appears that to a large extent, management is equated directly with measurement.

*We're in this management mode within the police service now, whereby you know, we've got to try and measure [everything]. Some of it you can, and some of it you can't. (MI, 25 years service, tape 37:8)*

One Inspector described measurement as the only means through which it was possible to provide evidence of getting the job done. Monitoring performance, measuring results all seem to fit quite easily into an organization where the business of the day involves evidence and proof.

*Unless it's documented the senior management wonder whether he is actually pulling his weight. But I can also understand senior management's point of view because they're required to produce the statistics and unless it's documented, it's not picked up, so it's a vicious circle. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:7)*

One consequence of adopting measurement and monitoring as management tools in the evidential climate of police work is the lack of trust that is associated by many officers with the emphasis on *proof*. Officers respond to the demands of management with the concepts and language of police work. The implication is that if an activity is not measured, then it is not recognized as valid, or rewarded in any way, much as is the case for gathering evidence to convict suspected criminals. For example, activities not specified as performance targets, or activities not easily measured, effectively render invisible the officers who have carried out that work; as this respondent explains:

*You see, there's an increased number of people involved in Neighbourhood Watch, by twenty percent ... now that's something they [the officers] can relate to downstairs, you know, it's achievable. Now to reduce the number of serious / fatal accidents, now they're in the lap of the gods there, really. (MI, 25 years service, tape 37:9)*

Officers frequently commented on the apparent gap between the actuality of their duties, and that which was measured and emphasized as important through the performance indicators. The example below is particularly useful at illustrating the direct link between the management-measurement assumptions on the one hand, and the impact that might have on the style of policing adopted by police officers:

*You're being monitored on false theoretical information which doesn't always show the actual work you do, and the results you've achieved. Anybody can go to the scene of a crime ... and take the details. That's not a problem. You can then allay their fears, make them feel comfortable, tell them it won't happen again, and reassure them. Or, you can go in there and just say: "Oh, another burglary". You both get treated the same in terms of monitoring. I think it's wrong. (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15:11)*

Each officer is, in turn, monitored and rendered visible by crude data such as the number of times computer data bases are consulted, as is illustrated below. The data consistently show how important a part monitoring, evidence and accountability play in defining the everyday duties of an officer. The process of collating numbers and statistics for a variety of external audiences and judgments permeates officers' working day:

*Police officers submit information via the liaison officer and he puts that information on the computer, so that's classified as one mark to you for submitting that piece of information. Should you ever interrogate the intelligence system if you want a bit of information, as soon as you log on that's then another point to you because you are seen to interrogate the intelligence system. (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15:10)*

That statistics do not necessarily reflect effort in all types of police work is source of great dissatisfaction to many officers. Their consequent invisibility to management ranks gives rise to significant resentment, and feelings of ineffectiveness as officers.

*Another statistic that I'm not particularly happy with at that moment is there are some crimes that can never be solved ... like a broken window in a car ... nobody saw anything ... but someone has to take the details ... there is a row of boxes on the computer and the final box is [a choice between] detected yes or no. So you can have five of those in a day which is quite likely, and so you can have five "no's". So your detection rate is zero, but you've actually done lots of work ... they're not seeing what work's actually being done (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15:10)*

A picture starts to emerge of police officers themselves feeling they are victims of this more recent emphasis on performance monitoring because it is ineffective. It cannot accommodate the nuances of 'quality work', only the measurement of that which is quantifiable. In addition officers present themselves as victims of the associated bureaucratic requirements placed upon them by the procedures of the criminal justice system, and their senior officers:

*Dropping a piece of litter requires a full file, quarter of an inch thick ... The police aren't strong enough to say to the prosecutors: "We're not doing it". We as individuals on the ground aren't prepared to spend all that time doing all those forms on something so simple ... One of our major obstacles is what the Crown Prosecution Service and the law demand. They're politicians, they're report writers, they're paper minded, not practical minded. I just find it very frustrating, and everybody else does too. (MPC, 30 years service, tape 23:4)*

This section has highlighted the importance of measurement to the practice of management in the force. The complex interaction that takes place between discourses of evidence, reprisals and management practices will be further explored in the next section.

## **Generating evidence**

Protection from reprisal, and potential for reprisal are two contradictory aspects that co-exist in the recently introduced appraisal system, and the Personal Development Profile (PDP). This section will examine some of the implications of that co-existence. Both the appraisal system and the PDP reflect a set of assumptions that are important in the present discussion.<sup>16</sup> Each of these management tools requires officers to evaluate their own job

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<sup>16</sup> It is through tools such as these that managerial psychology is pursued in the police. The demand for self-assessment, self-evaluation, and the self-improvement philosophy is not *necessarily* inappropriate in the police. The uncritical adoption of this managerial approach is however, problematic, in that it fails to take into account some of the important contradictions that arise because of the context in which they are adopted, and the assumptions about the extent to which 'hearts and minds' can be managed.

performance against behavioural criteria, and place great emphasis on self-criticism and self-evaluation. The onus is placed on officers to comment on their own strengths and weaknesses according to criteria such as communication skills, paperwork, teamwork, to formulate action plans for future career development, and to enact these plans on a day to day basis in order to prioritize and organize their workload. Where officers do actively engage in these activities, they participate in effect in formalizing self-criticisms, and placing that information in the domain of management control practices. This section will consider in some detail officers' interpretations of these management systems, rather than focusing on the prescriptive detail of the policies, and will explore their important responses to the associated demands for self-discipline.

For the purposes of the present analysis, the language used to describe the appraisal system is highly informative. As with the measurement discourse in the previous section,, officers' responses are heavily influenced by notions of evidence, *and* the necessity to engage in self-protective activities within these asymmetrical power relations. Despite the apparent emphasis on personal development in the appraisal documentation and discourse, officers are also given a numerical evaluation, on a scale of one to seven, which is intended as a summary of their performance.<sup>17</sup> The quote below illustrates the interwoven concepts of evidence, statistics, and evaluation of officers' performance:

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<sup>17</sup> Literature on appraisal indicates that judgmental aspects of appraisal schemes often negate developmental intent, when both are present in the same system (e.g. Sisson & Storey, 1988).

*We work on the principle of evidencing, substantiating the things that we say about people. When we do appraisals we're looking more and more at statistics to monitor officer's performance, the number of arrests. Dangerous that is of course, because anybody can go out and arrest people. (MI, 9 years service, fast track, tape 39:16)*

The Inspector suggests here that the requirement for providing evidence to support claims made in an appraisal about an officer's performance applies as much to the manager as it does the person being evaluated. This introduces the concepts of judgment and of audience, as evidence is only required if there is some audience who is to be satisfied one way or another, the power over that decision residing with the audience, and not the actor. Neither the manager nor the officer being assessed are the final evaluating audience, and both are required to account for their respective claims through some form of evidential information. Both parties are therefore potentially engaged in protecting themselves in the event of further scrutiny.

The act of committing the appraisal evidence to paper is seen to be highly significant. At the outset, the officer being evaluated is apparently involved in self-criticism. Revealing personal weakness or uncertainty about aspects of the job, or ability to do the job, seems to pose a threat to officers' status and standing in the suspicious organizational climate, and a culture which is said to value toughness and physical capacities.

Importantly, once the 'weaknesses' are *defined* on paper, in effect the officer loses all control of that information. At the same time, the information takes on the status of evidence. Information is apparently transformed into knowledge, the uses and consequences of which are unknown and beyond the influence of the person concerned. The implicit notion of consequences that might follow once the information is presented is indicative of the power implications in the transformation from information into knowledge. The officer concerned loses the capacity to influence any interpretation or presentation of that information, has no

say over who will see or use the knowledge, or necessarily use it for self-gain.

One Constable made explicit the connection and similarity in spirit between organizational demands for evidence and the evidence required by police work. Officers at all ranks participate in the prevailing evidential discourse in many ways, as exemplified below:

*[BK: Equal Opportunities seems to be a high profile issue in the force]  
Where's the problem? I've not seen it. But I'm not saying it doesn't exist. I need evidence. Like a policeman needs evidence. And I've not seen the evidence. But it doesn't mean to say that somebody hasn't seen the evidence.  
(MPC, thirty one years service, tape 14:23)*

In this emphasis on evidence rests a belief in the existence of incontrovertible facts, the truth of which cannot be denied. The certainty ascribed to 'facts' and evidence is rooted to some extent at least in officers' own reliance on evidence in detecting crime. It is not surprising then that a requirement for evidence has come to define the form of management control techniques in the organization:

*You can't just say: "This man is good, this man is not good". You've got to have hard facts. (MS, 14years service, tape 36:6)*

Evidence is something officers rely upon in the conduct of their duties, and implies in this context that fairness and rational judgment are possible because of the presence of evidence. Proof positive in the form of evidence is a source of protection against persecution and accusation of misconduct or incompetence within the organization, and a tool through which officers achieve success in detecting crime.

*I think the [appraisal system] is better in the sense that now you have to justify everything that they write about a person. Before they just accepted you on face value. Now they have to give examples of where people have done wrong. (MS, 12 years service, tape 34:5)*



The evidence itself appears to have more impact and influence when it is presented in some written form, be it statistics about results, or letters of commendation from the public kept on an officers' personal file, or comments on an appraisal form.

*As a supervisor I've always evidence gathered, prior to this [appraisal] system coming in. I've always kept an evidence book where I've noted things from officers, good or bad, and put them down in the log, and discussed that with them, got them to sign it. I think that's common sense. (MS, 8 years service, tape 33:20)*

For some, the evidential requirement of the appraisal system is seen to provide protection from the widely-reported favouritism that is said to have prevailed in previous appraisal systems, based as they were on the say-so of the senior officer alone.<sup>18</sup>

*I think the PCs and Sergeants and everybody gets a much fairer appraisal than they used to. I had a lot of ones under the old system and I lost out ... which is why I think I lost out on promotion to be honest. Whereas now under this system, the appraisal that was done on me actually sort of reflected on what I did and why I did it and gave examples. (MPC, 22 years service, tape 21:16)*

However, officers are not blindly accepting of the fairness in the new emphasis on evidence in appraisal, but some do regard it as providing at least a greater chance of fairness in the evaluation of their performance:

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<sup>18</sup> The implied capacity for senior officers to show bias in appraising officers under the previous non-evidence based appraisal system exposes flaws in the assumptions about the meritocracy of bureaucratic organizations.

*[BK: Is there less reliance then on somebody's opinion?] That's right. If somebody didn't like you, you know ... that could still happen to a point, but you're not all reliant on one person's view ... You used to have to have someone's backing at one time [for promotion success], whereas you don't really need that so much now because people look at the overall picture. (MPC, 22 years service, tape 21:16)*

More strongly stated, a Sergeant expresses similar thoughts:

*I agree with the [appraisal] system because no longer can it be based on hearsay, or just saying: "This person is crap." They have got to say: "This person is crap because ...". And there has got to be good evidence for it. (WPS, 13 years service, tape 11:3)*

It is informative to turn to the parallels between evidence as an organizational tool as opposed to evidence against criminals and suspects. After all, officers spend a great deal of the working day gathering evidence to be used *against* suspects. However, it is also the case that evidence can be used to provide protection to both officers and suspects, as reflected in the following example. Police officers present themselves as much in need of protection from those in authority over them, in this case senior officers, as suspects are in need of protection from the police. That evidence is recorded, be it on tape or written down, and is a crucial element in the provision of protection.

*PACE has basically set down a lot of guidelines for what we do and rules we need to follow. When it first came out a lot of people thought: "Shock, horror. We've got to do this differently". At the end of the day its only worked to our advantage ... now because its all tape recorded you know, can't really argue [about what has] been said. (MPC, 22 years service, tape 21)*

However, the permanence of written evidence (and its implicit visibility) can be problematic for officers. For many officers, the increasing requirement for written or recorded proof of effectiveness and results holds the potential for persecution and victimization at some

unknown time in the future. Many officers expressed discomfort at the necessity for providing written evidence of the work they have been doing, and with regard to their present and future action plans and performance. The requirement that officers in effect prove their effectiveness appears to invoke, for some, a climate of mistrust and suspicion. As one Inspector comments:

*Now we have to sort of document it. That is what I find a bit stressful these days. They don't trust us, that's the feeling I have. Unless it's actually documented, then they say we haven't done it. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:7)*

In the following comments, the same officer emphasized the increasing pressure placed on officers to account for themselves and their performance in a visible, documented fashion.

*Dealing with statistics, having to dot the "I's" and cross the "Ts" sort of performance indicators, and having to justify your existence, justify your position, justify your role. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:22)*

A woman Sergeant offers the following view:

*[BK: So if they wanted to get rid of an officer, what would they do?]. They start blocking them, and they start evidencing everything they do wrong. And then in the end they actually say: "Look, you're no good". (WS, 9 years service, tape 11:13)*

A consequence of mistrust is that many officers regard it as safer not to disclose weaknesses in the appraisal arena, or in any other evaluative sphere in their jobs. This is an acknowledgement of the permanent threat posed by information written down to be used as evidence in some unknowable way in the future:

*People are still unwilling, I think, to reveal all their weaknesses or their faults, because they fear it will be written down on a piece of paper, and for-ever be used against them. (MI, 9 years service, fast track, tape 39)*

Once a weakness or criticism is commended to paper, it becomes long-lasting, irretrievable evidence, which can be used against an officer at any time in the future:

*It's a complete mismatch. I think it's good that police officer's careers should be monitored ... police officers should be able to ... identify the problems, weaknesses and also their strengths. But what I don't think is quite right is the amount of emphasis that's put on this. Throughout the first two years [of probation] whatever you say, do, breath, think, is written down and can be brought up against you at any time. (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15)*

The potential for weaknesses to have unseen negative consequences in the future, once written down and 'evidenced', is widely recognized:

*[The way it works is that] it can end up [with the Sergeant] saying: "look, twice you've identified [this weakness], in week fifteen [of the probationary period of two years]. You've also identified it in week seventy four. What is wrong with you? Why can't you question people?" It will be noted and they won't just say it to you. They'll write it down. Then it's there and it cannot be removed ... I think too high [an] emphasis is placed on the written word within the PDP. (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15)*

It is the written nature of that evidence that provides the potential threat. This evidence becomes an indelible source of knowledge about an officer, over the future use of which he or she has no control.

*I've been criticized in my PDP for being too honest ... for not blowing my own trumpet enough. I will put down things that are real, that are the truth, that are honest, and at the end of it people have said: "You shouldn't have put it like that because it will be looked bad[ly] upon in eighteen months time ... [when it is read by] someone who doesn't know you ... This means that you can get someone who's not doing very well in the job, [writes] a complete pack of lies in his PDP, but then in 18 months when it's read, he's a good officer. It's in black and white ... (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15:9)*

In this context of potential punitive consequences management tools such as the PDP and the appraisal system are equated, by a majority of the officers interview, with monitoring rather than development; with potential punitive action, rather than evaluation towards development. Officers emphasize the political nature of the self-disciplinary and evaluative process.

*I think officers think it's a joke ... why are they keeping tabs on us? You can use [the system] to help improve your career ... if you as an individual use it then all well and good ... unfortunately I don't think its always seen as that. It's used as a tool to monitor your performance for people who don't know you as a person. They know you as words on a piece of paper. (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15:10)*

These comments suggest that despite the rhetoric of self-assessment and development, in effect, each officer is reduced to that which is recorded on paper, in writing. The written assessment appears to endure, and gain significance over time, as such documents are considered when making future promotion or job allocation decisions.

*You knew where you were. Now you don't ... the Sergeant can't put anything down on paper. He may know what you're like but how's he going to get evidence, like the fact that my old ladies, I get on very well with the old dears [visited at the retirement home as part of community duties] ... none of those things are on paper, there's not one bit of that on paper anywhere. (MPC, 19 years service, tape 18:14)*

A further source of concern for many officers is the difficulty they claim to have in providing the requisite evidence because of the particular kind of work they do. The officer above expresses this frustration that only certain types of police work are valued through the constrained list of performance indicators. It is, after all, these monitoring indicators discussed in the previous section that give shape to much of the written evidence so highly valued as a source of management control and information.

The unsupervised nature of much of police work, described in Chapter 6 as providing the opportunities for them to exercise discretion, proves to be problematic and contradictory in new ways in the evidence gathering management climate. Officers in different ranks do acknowledge the difficulty in gathering adequate evidence for appraisals in particular jobs, and highlight the practical impossibility of maintaining sufficient surveillance over officers' activities to gather evidence, given the actuality that much of police work is conducted out of sight and at a distance from the supervising officer.

*It think it's fair in essence. If you can't evidence it, don't use it. But it is often, depending how you work, it's very difficult to collect evidence. Now working here where I have fairly close contact with the Sergeants every day ... it isn't too difficult to continually collect evidence. [MI, 25 years service, tape 38:15)*

In practice, despite the problems associated with gathering sufficient evidence, or with fears as to how that evidence might be used, officers also revealed mistrust in the entire process of appraisal and development rhetoric. Many officers expressed the view that the ultimate decisions about their progress and opportunities were made at headquarters, by senior officers in the Personnel Department, who had little personal knowledge of each officer's abilities and performance.

*My boyfriend had his appraisal ... they use the numbers one to seven ... average is sort of three or four. And his sergeant gave him high numbers, five or six for one thing, and it came back. They [headquarters] wouldn't accept it. I mean if that was the sergeant's honest opinion of his capacity in that area ... but headquarters say no, 'high flyers' should get this, not the ordinary Bobby on the beat ... it's all a bit of a farce really. (WPC, 4 years service, tape 1)*

While officers recognize the need to protect themselves, to play the game of self-assessment and self-protection, the belief is strongly held that their participation is entirely secondary to

the removed decision makers at headquarters, who appear to make decisions on the basis of averages and statistics rather than the detail of personal self-assessments.

## **Conclusion**

Some scholars have remarked on the difficulty inherent in defining measures of productivity in 'people-processing organizations' like the police (e.g. Chatterton, 1983:196). The contribution of this chapter in this regard is to make explicit some of the consequences and contradictions that inform and arise out of those difficulties.

Furthermore, this section has illustrated how the evidential nature of police work informs and shapes officers' responses to management strategies that require self-evaluation and assessment. Their knowledge of the practical implications and demands of one set of workplace practices (detecting crime) informs their interpretation of and response to another set of demands (managerial strategies). That officers engage in an evidential discourse with regard to management tools is highly indicative of the way in which information about the self has the potential to become translated into knowledge of a kind that might be used against them, over which they lose control. Requirements for evidence, knowledge, and information about the self translate into a disciplinary regime that is regarded with great suspicion, irrespective of policy intent. Accordingly, the data show that the power relations of appraisal and surveillance intensify officers' sense of anxiety and insecurity in the organization.

The data in this chapter have shown that bureaucratization, combined with intensified monitoring, reinforces individuals' sense of insecurity and consequently their defensive orientations. Furthermore, it can be argued on the basis of the data presented in this chapter that 'new' practices of management, which in the police seem to be often-equated with measurement, are no less rationalizing in intent than the assumptions of bureaucratization. The data have shown that the demands of performance *measurement* are more influential than

*development* intent, as espoused in aspects of management practices. Indeed, the data have shown that many officers' experience the *developmental* demands of management techniques, such as appraisals and performance indicators, as *measurement and assessment*. As a consequence, officers are frequently defensive in their engagement with performance management tools. One of the ways in which this defensiveness manifests itself is to protect aspects of themselves, their professional and personal identities, from scrutiny and measurement.

This chapter has engaged critically with the practices associated with management in the constabulary, and with the ways in which officers' remain active in their engagement with the associated organizational demands on their performance, and their 'hearts and minds'. As the introduction to the chapter highlighted, detailed consideration of officers' interactions with, and responses to, organizational practices (such as those associated with management) shows the subtle and complex ways in which individuals are active agents in the shaping of those processes and structure, albeit not all-powerful and unconstrained in their influence.

These themes will be further explored in the next chapter, where analysis will turn to a close consideration a number important ways in which officers bring identity concerns into their interactions with, and responses to organizational rhetoric, practices, and hierarchies.



## Chapter 9

### Negotiating identity

While the rhetoric and practices of the new managerial discourse in the police have become a significant feature of the workplace culture, traditional militaristic rationality remains highly influential. Both approaches to achieving discipline and control in the organization place demands on officers' identities, albeit in different ways. Building on the foregoing analysis, this chapter will explore some of the ways in which those identity concerns are encouraged, and sometimes exacerbated, in response to the demands of many traditional cultural practices, *and* newly managerial practices of the police organization.

The first section, managing definition, considers the multiple ways in which officers define and re-define the nature of police work, and of self, in order to create status within the organization, and elevate aspects of their own identities. The section seeks to elaborate on the context in which police work is carried out, and explores some of the organizational consequences of identity negotiations about status, and self. The second section, managing reputation, examines ways in which officers seek to manipulate and manage reputation as a mechanism for surviving and progressing in the force. The analysis illustrates the ways in which informal cultural practices relating to reputation influence officers responses to some of the demands of recent management practices. Reputation is presented as a significant feature of organizational knowledge that is closely linked with notions of knowledge and power, as conceived of by Foucault. The third section, managing visibility, explores officers' responses to the numerous constraints and demands of visibility within the organization that characterize both traditional and managerial ideology and practice. The section also explores

some of the contradictions inherent in seeking *invisibility* in the organization. Consideration of officers' views and experiences of the discipline and grievance procedure show the potential disciplinary effects of visibility for officers concerned.

Earlier discussions of critical themes in the study of power have illustrated that organizations frequently create or reinforce problems of identity for their members. The research found that this was the case in the changing world of the police organization. Each of the three sections in this chapter will highlight some of the ways in which officers interact with, and respond to the ensuing, often competing organizational demands on their identities. As the demands of both militaristic and managerial rationalities operate in tandem, the data will reflect that simultaneity.

### **Managing definition**

Emphasis on order, linear command and authority structures, are still in operation and highly visible in the police, communicating a host of expected behaviours and demeanours to those in the organization. Officers wear uniforms, and the stripes and insignia of rank worn on their shoulders advertise the relative position of the rank of the wearer in the command hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> Hierarchical status is both visibly communicated, defined, and understood by officers, and others staff in the organization. Senior officers, from the rank of Inspector and above, can expect to be addressed as 'Sir' or 'Ma'am', or the more familiar 'Guv'.<sup>2</sup>

However important hierarchical rank definitions may be, there are a number of other ways in

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<sup>1</sup> Van Maanen (1979:45) remarks that a number of writers have noted the existence of elaborate rules about operational procedures, but also, demeanour, dress and public conduct (e.g. Bittner, 1970)

<sup>2</sup> It is instructive to note that until recently in the force, Constables and Sergeants wore blue shirts, while more senior officers wore white shirts. This recent visible change to hierarchical differential status was introduced at roughly the same time as doing away with the remaining separate senior officers' dining rooms and toilet facilities in the region. The blue collar / white collar distinction between junior and senior officers is consequently removed from sight, yet remains a significant distinction in practice.

which definition is used by officers to contend with different aspects of police culture, such as experience, type of work, and length of service. Particularly informative are the ways in which different types of police work are employed to establish status hierarchies and difference, the extent to which communities participate in creating police definitions, and the ways in which officers manage definitions of police work. These themes will be explored below.

The difference discourse is particularly prevalent in interactions between CID and uniformed officers, and to some extent the traffic division. The officer below presents a typical defense of the apparently beleaguered uniformed beat officers. Here he defends the variety of work and the necessity for the police service to attend to the smallest of incidents.

*You'll never manage without the beat. You can take away traffic, you can take away CID, community affairs, all these other little departments, and the beat will deal with anything. We mostly attend any job and we will deal with it and it's only if it becomes involved that we will hand over to one of the other departments. But you take them away for a week and nothing will change. But you take the beat away for a day, who's going to go to the jobs? Yet we're seen as very much sort of the **poor relation**. (MS, 14 years service, tape 36:26) [emphasis added]*

The implication is that the uniformed beat officers and their work are not valued in the everyday discursive practices of the organization. Despite claiming that the beat are vital to the effective functioning of the force, the Sergeant is almost resigned to their perceived lesser status. He goes on to bemoan the relative paucity of equipment available to beat officers, as a visible measure of their lesser standing in the force:

*[The traffic department have] these roof bars, there's about four strobe lights in there. We have one single little blue strobe, and I always think we go to more emergency jobs with the blue light on then they do, because they only go to the big bumps. Usually we're there first. [BK: How have they managed to build this prestige?] I don't know, it's just, they just have. They just acquired this sort of real elite, these wonderful cars that are kept beautifully, you know the best of everything. (MS, 14 years service, tape 36:26)*

He appears resigned to the subordinated status of beat officers in the organization, and reluctantly accepts the elevated identity and trappings of the traffic division with their fast cars and flashing lights. Despite his apparent disgruntlement, his response is limited to a mild verbal comment, tinged largely by compliance and acceptance that the inequity is somehow inevitable. This long serving Sergeant reflects below on the uniformed beat as a job of last resort, a repository for those without 'any sign of anything':

*On the beat you're seen as sort of like a dumping ground. You know, once you've done your initial two years if you show any sign of anything, then you'll either go onto other departments, or you'll get stripes, or something will happen to you. You won't get left there on the beat um. (MS, 14 years service, tape 36:26)*

By contrast the PC cited below, who is female, and very new to the police service, regards the uniformed beat as an entirely rewarding section of policing. Her discourse of variety and activity is quite the opposite to that of the beleaguered, trapped Sergeant cited above:

*My husband keeps saying: "Be a Sergeant, be a Sergeant". Why? So I can be in Custody for the rest of my life, or locked away in a control room, or you know, have an admin job? No, in this job, you've got all the variety and that's what I like. (WPC, 18 months service, tape 6:21)*

While he resents a combination of lack of choice, status within the organization, she enjoys 'variety' in the same sort of work, and invests in the action discourse of 'street cops'. The

Sergeant chooses to compare his position with groups like Traffic, with their fast cars and equipment, whereas the Constable chooses different criteria for comparison: she invests in the action discourse of police work, and contrasts the supposed variety of her job with the 'punishment' jobs: Custody, Control Room duty, or Administration. That she is choosing to venerate work that by many accounts has little enduring standing in the force, does not enter her analysis of her own situation. Yet given that very few officers with long service regard the beat as 'success', her investment in beat work as a career in the service may lead to longer term dissatisfaction.

A Detective Inspector commented on a key feature of job satisfaction in CID, that offers an informative contrast with the 'variety' alluded to above, and also the earlier reference to dealing with 'everything' on the beat:

*CID have always um either commenced the job themselves or picked up a job and they've seen it through from start to finish. Therefore there is tremendous job satisfaction within the CID ... CID come in, and they interview, they obtain statements visit the witnesses um they interview, they prepare the file. (DI, 23 years service, tape 41:19)*

CID officers have the opportunity to influence a range of events, to start something and to see it to completion. This is in direct contrast to the beat officer, who picks up whatever job happens to come their way, and then relinquishes it if it requires specialist knowledge<sup>3</sup> This allocation of work illustrates the point that uniformed officers are interchangeable, and ultimately dispensable, in some way disposable. It is, however, in the interests of those in CID to feed and maintain the idea that CID is different from the beat, that their work is more important and gives more satisfaction. Wrapped up in these battles for superior status are officers' personal concerns with the differentiation of self from others, of investing in the

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<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, CID officers are not tied to the shift system, and as a consequence have greater control over their 'private' domain. Shift officers give up much control to the demands of their 'public' shift work.

status ascribed to one group rather than another. Their experience of the police organization is highly influenced by the ongoing differentiation according to status hierarchies.

On joining the force, officers don their uniforms, and in so doing enter into what is dominantly constructed as an implicit contract with the public. In terms of this apparently consensual contract, the private individual is defined as subordinate to the police officer, by virtue of the legal authority vested in the role. Consequently, officers enter into pre-existing sets of relations and definitions between police and interested communities: criminals, the public, governing bodies, other police officers and different ranks within the force. Each set of relations pre-exists the involvement of the individual newcomer to the job. Uniform, command structure, and community expectations, together inform the structure and roles into which the private individual must fit, and which contribute to their experience of the job.

The examples that follow illustrate some of those community expectations with which individual officers must interact, some of which is negative and critical of police officers in general:

*I didn't realize how much hostility there is towards the police from certain sections of society, and I think the police force as a whole is losing a lot of its support, from normal members of the public. (WPC, 4 years service, tape 1: 2)*

That community expectations affect the police organization in practical ways is apparent also in decisions about the deployment of officers on the beat, as reported below. Whether officers walk the beat, or patrol in cars is to some degree determined by whether the community in whose midst they work expects to interact with an officer on a one to one basis, and expects to see the traditional sight of the Bobby walking the beat, or not. The centre of one of the policing areas in the Constabulary, provides a useful example. The town is frequented by

large numbers of tourists, and the visible foot Bobby is deemed to be more appropriate to policing than fast patrol cars:

*There's certain places that [Community policing] works better because that's what they the people over there expect to see: policemen [sic] on the beat. It's a very big tourist area ... in the cities, you find that people aren't prepared to wait. They want you yesterday and so there are places where they've actually put the Bobbies back into the cars. (WPC, 18 years service, tape 2:5)*

One long serving Constable explained the influence of communities strictly in terms of social class divisions:

*You got treated with contempt by those with money and subservience by those without. The working class folk they looked up to the policeman in awe, and the posh people looked down at you (MPC, 30 years service, Federation Representative, tape 23:7)*

Interestingly, criminals and suspects are another influential community that contributes to the definition of status for police officers. While the uniform indicates status as a police officer to the public at large, at the same time it appears to be an indication of lack of status to criminals and suspects:

*It's down to the criminals to be quite honest because sometimes you'll get a criminal in, you'll arrest somebody, and they'll say: "I'm not speaking to you, you've got a uniform on. I'll speak to a CID man [sic]." I mean, I've done it, it's been done to me and I've gone down and I've spoken to them because I was in the CID and they'll [the suspects] tell you [in CID] everything, but they won't tell anybody in uniform. They think that they're that much better because they haven't got a uniform on. (WPC, 18 years service, tape 2:12)*

That police officers are, in some measure, dependent on the offender for definition and status

is indicative of some of the contradictions at work in the definition of status and identity amongst police officers.<sup>4</sup> It is ironic that the relative status of types of police work within the organization is influenced by offenders, despite the very significant legal powers police have at their disposal to use against these same individuals. However, officers within the organization also engage in and reinforce status differentials in other ways. For example:

*If you stopped somebody... especially if you give them a caution or something, because we don't actually dish out the tickets, that the traffic men do. Because that's all they ever do, obviously they have other jobs ... so we'll just give somebody a caution. they say: "Glad it wasn't a traffic man because I'd have had a ticket for that wouldn't I?". So it's how people perceive them I think. (WPC, 18 years service, tape 2:13)*

Here a beat Constable is engaging in another game of competing hierarchies, whereby she discounts the work of traffic officers as trivial, with which she does not have to engage. At the same time, she gains the favourable opinion of the public. The 'traffic men' apparently have little better to do with their time than write out traffic tickets, an act of police authority she devalues. She is able to earn favour from the public by merely dealing the traffic offender a caution, thereby remaining the 'good guy', and at the same time, creating a definition of her own police work as more important and worthwhile than merely dealing with insubstantial issues like traffic offenses.

At the same time, it is unequivocally the case that officers are able to respond to and have an impact over the communities they police. They exercise the power of the law when their authority or status is threatened, or as the legitimate need arises. The example below refers to a scene witnessed during the research in the waiting area, as three youths made fun of the officer behind the reception desk. While not breaking any law, the youths were showing some

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<sup>4</sup> Fielding (1994) likens police conformity to the peer group with that of teenage offenders, who it is argued elsewhere, conform to values of machismo in order to fit in with their peer group.



measure of disrespect to the individual and the office they represent. Yet, the officer chooses to define the interaction as ‘abuse’:

*I won't allow it myself. I've arrested people in police stations before because of the abuse [emphasis original]. I'll say: "Pack it in! You've been warned. If you carry on being abusive, you'll be arrested." If they do carry on, then you arrest them. (WPC, four years service, tape 4:5)*

The example illustrates the imposition of the officers' authority over others, rather than imposition of the law. The power police officers have over the public, by virtue of their right to arrest, detain, fine, or reprimand, is vast. The range of tools available to officers to choose from is wide, far wider than their range of powers over the public as private individuals. It is in theory possible to command compliance of some sort from the public, even where that measure of cooperation is not willingly given. Where a civilian might have to walk away from an interaction, or resort to a physical fight to impose their will, an officer can invoke a range of legal powers that give them the discretion *and* authority to impose that will on others.

*I'm not paid to take shit off people, it's as simple as that. So if people are mouthing off at me: "Right, you've been warned. Any more and you'll be under arrest. If they carry on, I would arrest them and yet you get all the bobbies ... people walk past and shout at them and that and they'll just you know, walk off. (WPC, 4 years service, tape 4:19)*

No matter what the circumstances, police officers are able to respond with some form of coercive power. Yet, officers repeatedly and insistently respond to their work, the police organization, and the communities they police by defining themselves as victims. The same woman Constable who refuses to ‘take shit’ from the public, hints at an ‘inevitable’ fate for police officers in which they will be, unfairly, the victims of complaint from members of the

public.

*People up here just want to complain about police. [BK: Oh really, so they're very anti-police up here?] More anti-police than down south definitely from what I can gather. People have always said if you haven't got a complaint, you're not doing your job right, and it's definitely worse up north<sup>5</sup>, whereas down south you could probably go through your whole career without getting a complaint. (WPC, 4 years service, tape 4:22)*

Officers use the authority of the law to fight off feelings of disrespect from communities, and to justify using the power of the law. At the same time, it is entirely possible for officers to use the anonymity ascribed by the uniform, to exert overt power over others, based on an authority acquired because of the police role. Despite that authority, the discourse of police officers as victims is strikingly prevalent. The contradictory discourse that surrounds power and victimization is clearly significant.

Individual officers become the target of general dissatisfaction with the police from the communities they police, and it is the case that, on becoming a police officer, the individual enters into a set of relations that pre-exist their involvement and influence.<sup>6</sup> Consequent initial interactions with the public are constrained and informed by the public's varied experiences of the police as a whole, rather than the individual officer. Each officer therefore acquires the identities ascribed to 'police officer' from external sources.

Within the organization, a number of more recent changes within the police organization give rise to further discourse of powerlessness by which many officers define themselves. For example, the criticism expressed below of the graduate recruitment programme reflects one

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<sup>5</sup> Regional differences within the Constabulary between community expectations of police officers alluded to here were widely expressed during many interviews, a theme to which this section will return.

<sup>6</sup> The officer acquires pre-existing community expectations of police officers. At the same time, the officer's personal identity takes a back seat to (Weberian) notion of 'impersonal authority'.

strand of the victim discourse:

*You can come into this job with a degree in absolutely anything, that's totally irrelevant to policing, and be an Inspector within five years. (WPC, 4 years service, tape 1:15) [emphasis added]*

Traditional police skills are seen to be devalued by the emphasis on university degrees and A Levels in recruiting new officers. Many of the 'old guard' regard themselves as the victims of, and subject to, skill redefinition and devaluation. The emphasis on communication skills in new recruit training and in performance appraisals (see Appendix D) was derided by many of the longer serving officers interviewed, and training methods are labeled whimsical and out of touch with the common sense, and basic knowledge of the law, declared to be the mainstay of 'real' policing. Along similar lines, a further hierarchy is created between policy decision makers (senior officers ) on the one hand, and the rank and file who declare themselves to be doing the 'real' work of policing on the other.<sup>7</sup> The 'victims' of policy decisions manage their apparent lack of control over organizational direction by branding those in positional power over them as irrelevant:

*The majority of decisions on policy are not made in the station. For equipment wise, you have the traffic committee and the fleet manager. You have the radio people at headquarters. Everything revolves round the Wendy house or the Dream Factory. Those are it's two names. (MPC, 24, tape 19:9)*

What emerged through the course of the interviews, therefore, was an ongoing process of definition, included in which was the recurrent theme of police as victims of community expectations, management control strategies, accountability to senior officers and auditing bodies, and varying types of police work. The importance of definition will be extended in the next section, which will explore some of the power practices associated with reputation, as it

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<sup>7</sup> Reiner (1992:128) notes that pragmatism is a key feature of police culture. He ascribes the 'down-to-earth, anti-theoretical' perspective as typical of rank and file, but also, amongst a number of Chief Constables.

operates informally, and in terms of managerial demands for revelation about aspects of the self.

## Managing reputation

That officers actively and repeatedly engage in the crafting and defense of their own reputation in the organization has already been established in discussion of the research methodology. Equally apparent is the extent to which a reputation is subject to the vagaries of definition. A reputation can be earned by the individual or it can be imposed by any number of the related communities in which police officers operate.<sup>8</sup> This section will examine some of the practices associated with reputation, as they emerged through closer analysis of the research data.

In the active management, cultivation, and avoidance of reputation, assumptions about physical prowess are as important as experience. To some extent this applies to male and female officers, although it was most clearly articulated by male interviewees. Typically, the younger male officer, lacking experience, earns respect through being seen to be pro-active, tough and fearless, in what one Detective Constable referred to as his 'glory days'. By contrast, the male Constable with many years of experience may have the respect of younger colleagues, despite *potentially* reduced fitness and agility.<sup>9</sup> The research suggests that length of service remains highly valued, such that in the long term, status amongst colleagues can be achieved in this way without having to progress through the ranks. Officers create a hierarchy

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Interestingly, he notes a 'growing number of exceptions' to this rule amongst Chief Constables.

<sup>8</sup> Van Maanen (1973:413) remarks on the significance of the 'departmental reputation' new recruits earn for themselves, that will follow them for the 'whole career'. This reputation is earned by passing various behavioural 'tests', which on a day to day basis, show whether the officer has 'got what it takes'.

<sup>9</sup> Length of service and experience were often conflated into a single concept during the interviews. In a crucial sense, experience of different types of police work does not necessarily equate with length of service. Officers use the term 'experience' loosely, according to which of these competing hierarchies they wish to afford status in a given context.

of experience, length of service, which can be invoked to compete with the formal command hierarchy when necessary, or the assumed physical agility of younger (male) officers when necessary.

However, as the example below indicates, extended length of service can also lead to a reputation of obsolescence in terms of the newer managerial discourse. In this example the appraising senior officer is ascribed a reputation as a dinosaur, with the associated implication of being intransigent, out of date and irrelevant in the current management climate. At the same time, the female Sergeant quoted extensively below draws attention to the significance of gender and notions of masculinity in the making of reputation.

*I don't know that I would have been comfortable [being appraised], because he doesn't understand the system, because he is a dinosaur, and because he is old school. I am not sure I would have felt confident with his skills. It's also about reputation [in addition to gender] ... I can assure you that a woman is an idiot until they prove they are not an idiot. A bloke is a great bloke until he proves he's a prat. (WPS, 13 years service, tape 11:3)*

Officers are apparently subjected to reputations imposed by others, such as the dinosaur of the previous example, and at the same time expected to actively earn some sort of recognition and reputation for themselves in order to succeed in the organization. The contradictory demands that inform reputation discourses invite further consideration.

The role of reputation and its close parallels with a kind of discipline are an integral part of the organization, in its old and new forms. The authoritarian militaristic senior officer of old might still rely on his positional authority to impose order, and be able to rely to some extent on that reputation to impose some of the control in his absence. At the same time, reputation is intricately bound up in aspects of newer regime of self discipline in the newer management mode of control in the organization, as the sergeant quoted above is well aware. That it is

necessary, in her view, to understand 'the system', implies some negative consequence if the managerial system is used without being understood.

Some of that 'danger' might be explained if the apparent durability of reputation is considered. A junior ranking officer describes in some detail the negative consequences that might result from having a negative reputation, and the durability of a reputation once earned:

*Within the job there's a lot of people who know a lot of people who know a lot of people ... it's not quite the old boys' network, but it is very much who you know, if your face fits ... if for one reason or another you become a person, and I may well become a person who, for whatever reason, is not looked upon as a competent officer, known to create situations ... treat people roughly, prisoners or members of the public. Then you get put into that bracket whether it's true or not. Then you won't go anywhere. That's because of people's perceptions of you ... maybe because of gossip. (MPC, 18 months service, tape 15:10)*

A more senior officer recognizes the similar intransigence of reputation once earned.

*It's difficult to get rid of a label that might be attached to you, that's for sure. (MI, 9 years service, fast track, tape 39)*

The attempts at impression management and caution about revealing weakness or the 'development needs' discussed in Chapter 8 are to some extent in response to the significance of reputation within the organization. The reputation that an officer earns, whether fairly or undeservedly, plays a highly influential role in shaping their experience of working in the organization. Information about an officers' professional competence and experience are often just as influential in shaping a reputation as exploits attributed to them through association with other events.

At the informal level then, the making and breaking of reputations are well-established

practices in the force, seemingly irrespective of the accuracy or assumptions upon which the reputation might be based. Despite potential inaccuracy or malicious rumour reputation once achieved proves to be as potentially indelible and long-lived as the evidence written on paper discussed in the previous chapter.

The self surveillance and self criticism in which officers are required to engage when being appraised, or during their probationary training, has potential for consequences in terms of the reputation an officer might create for themselves in the process. In a climate in which reputation is highly significant, and often durable, any information an officer makes 'publicly' available, is likely to inform the informal reputation mill.

More experienced officers, well aware of the significance and durability of evidence about reputation recognize dangers in exposing weaknesses through the self-monitoring procedures:

*You feel like pulling the book [Personal Development Profile] away because that book goes with them so everybody sees it. (MS, 14 years service, tape 36:27)*

Information about an officer has the potential to be used in a disciplinary rather than a purely developmental manner, as the probationers are encouraged to believe. More experienced officers highlight the pitfalls of weaknesses or mistakes becoming public knowledge. A senior officer reveals some of the surveillance intent behind the self assessments officers are expected to write about themselves:

*The problem is you can sit there all day and say black people are lovely and all women are great ... in a teaching forum I would know that it is wrong to say anything, so I keep my gob shut, and nod at the right times. And it is very hard to see through someone like that. So a good way of seeing how people really are, and how honest they are as a person, is to get them to write an assessment about themselves ... when I first had to write them I thought they were a load of crap, because nobody ever told me why. (WPS, 13 years service, tape 11:3)*

To a large extent, self analysis has become an integral part of the management process in the organization. Officers may not cooperate freely, but the demands for participation are persistent. As the organization becomes increasingly accountable to its supervising bodies, the requirement that officers discipline *themselves* in the interests of the organization are an increasingly urgent management concern. Management through self discipline is increasingly relied upon to make up for the inadequacies of traditional militaristic authority:

*In the olden days, everybody was subject to discipline and they were supervised quite rigidly. These days there is a lot of self discipline required. Consequently, it's easier, especially when they've got through their probation, for officers to take a back number and coast along, not get themselves involved, become untidy, shoes aren't shined, tunics aren't pressed. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:5)*

The officer quoted above reflects an interesting combination of regret at the passing of dress standards that accompanied the militaristic mode of control. At the same time, he also shows awareness of the potential for those officers not concerned with advancing their careers to take a back seat once their probationary period was over. He recognizes that self discipline is that mode of control which has come to replace the direct authoritarian discipline that accompanied the actual supervision of work on a daily basis that existed during the more militaristic mode of control:



*You can't be with them all the time, whereas twenty odd years ago the Inspector was with them on the shift all the time, the Sergeant was there all the time. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:5)*

Reputation increasingly becomes incorporated as part of indirect discipline in the force, and illustrates some of the very subtle ways in which knowledge-related practices might become disciplinary, even when, in this instance, reputation is not an explicit feature of managerial policies. As officers express the potential for a label to identify and attach itself to a person in some indelible, irredeemable way, they also show an awareness of the necessity to respond strategically to demands for self discipline and self assessment. Survival and success are to some extent dependent upon learning to 'work the system', to keep weaknesses private, and manage reputation accordingly. Many officers learned early on in their police career not to be too trusting of the espoused values of management control systems. They also soon become aware of the extent to which their careers, opportunities and experience of being in the force are to a large extent dependent on the opinions of supervising officers, and are in the hands of many others for the development and maintenance of a reputation. They become particularly aware of the dangers of developing a negative reputation very early on, and in effect, resist the full impact of the management control system by an active process of managing information about themselves as a result.

*I didn't have too many problems because I cottoned onto what they were doing [laughter] ... I know a girl in our class had real problems. She was lacking in self confidence and she used to write her self assessment exactly how she felt. (WPC, 4 years service, tape 1)*

However, complete withdrawal and non-participation in the prevalent discourse of self assessment would be an ineffective strategy for success in the organization. Visibility is an absolute necessity in order to be recognized, and hence provided with the necessary variety of experience and training for promotion or transfer to different types of police work. Officers

face a dilemma as a consequence, because it is possible to earn a negative reputation for seeking to manage reputation. The process of becoming known and reputation management are therefore both key to success in the force, and are often out of officers' direct control. The following section will consider in some detail the implications of achieving visibility in the organization.

## **Managing visibility**

In no small measure the police uniform alerts officers and the public to the relative authority of the wearer, over the public at large, and within the organization. Accordingly, uniforms convey a range of messages about the identity of the wearer, messages about tradition, conformity, authority, and presumed standards. Indeed it is largely due to the continued presence of uniforms that the police are so readily associated with militaristic rationality. Police uniforms heighten officers' visibility, and raise expectations amongst the public that an effective, responsible person is at hand, to deal with any crises or situations that might arise. Uniforms communicate an expectation that the wearer has certain powers, is competent, authoritative, and effective.

One officer comments on the contradiction between the expectations by the public of officers' visible authority, and the extent to which she feels untrained to live up to the expectations of competence associated with the uniform:

*I think first aid is the biggest thing really. Because people tend to look towards you as being the professional figure, that you will know what to do. It's funny, people tend to see you and think because you are a police officer you are not frightened of anything ... I'm not superhuman. I'm still a person.*  
(WPC, 4 years service, tape 1)

However, visibility informs more than officers' experiences while working with the public. It

is a crucial element in succeeding and surviving in the organization, and officers recognize this necessity. They also recognize, however, that visibility has to be achieved within certain organizationally defined parameters if it is to be effective:

*I'm just a reliable, conscientious sort, but I'm not sure that that is the sort they want in my rank in today's police service ... you just look at the up and coming people, and they are all about image these days. I don't know if gimmickry is the right word, but you know, if you can make yourself known through suggestions and ideas and schemes and gimmickry to some degree, you stand a chance of getting on. (MI, 25 years service, tape 37:11)*

It is interesting how widely shared are the ideas as to what constitutes the 'right image'.

*I think if you look at the Superintendent rank today you see this breed of people coming through, young, stylish, create a good image in the eyes of the public. (MI, 25 years service, tape 37:12)*

In contrast to such 'stylish visibility', is the low ranking officer who is regarded as an anonymous number on the listing of officers on the payroll:

*The Steady Eddy sorts were just sort of, run of the mill, just establishment numbers. (MI, 25 years service, tape 37:11)*

Demands for visibility in practice, are contradictory. The anonymity that results from having an identifying number is resented by many because it makes them invisible as an individual. Officers often complained of feeling like interchangeable 'pawns' within the organization, having no identity of their own other than as one officer amongst hundreds of similar officers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 'Pawns' implies a degree of powerless to control actions, of being subject to the 'moves' decided by those with more authority and power.

*I don't like having a number. I'd rather be known by my name. You know we are dealing with individual people, rather than a number ... (MPC, 30 years service, Federation Representative, tape 23:17)*

It is possible for officers to be completely visible to members of the public on the one hand because of their uniform, and yet be reasonably anonymous within the organization for the same reason.

There are certain contexts within the organization in which officers prefer the invisibility, and others in which visibility is entirely necessary to succeed. This final section will consider more closely some of the contradictions associated with visibility. One important example arises out of officers' accounts of the internal discipline and grievance procedure. Officers are particularly critical of the discipline and grievance procedure in terms of the negative visibility it might attract to themselves should they employ it to air a grievance.

*If you've never used [the grievance procedure], you're very reluctant to get a sort of, black mark, against your name ... even if they don't actually record anything against you, you're still going to be regarded as being one to watch. (MS, 14 years service, tape 36:21)*

The unofficial 'black mark' is awarded as a consequence of being seen to be a potential troublemaker, one who does not comply, follow orders, or fit easily into the culture and social grouping. Invoking a formal grievance against another officer implies a breaking of ranks, in this most hierarchical of organizations. That officers fear future victimization is clearly important in a climate which places such emphasis on a 'victim' discourse.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Reiner (1992:114) notes that policemen [sic] are aware of being constantly suspicious, ascribed to the need to be constantly on the look-out for trouble, potential danger, or 'clues to offences'.

*I think [officers] are very reluctant to use it [the grievance procedure] not because they think it won't work, because I think on the one or two occasions it has been used recently, it has worked. The top brass are very keen that it should work, it should be seen [to work]. But I think [officers] are wary that even if you win that one fight, you're going to lose because you have a black mark against you, because you took up the grievance procedure. (MS, 14 years service, tape 36:20)*

By maintaining an avenue for grievances, senior officers are in effect responding to pressures from external bodies, public pressure, and the negative press that follows high profile claims of harassment or discrimination that, if they reach a tribunal, receive wide press coverage. It is in their interest to promote the idea that a formal grievance procedure exists, and can be used by officers regardless of rank or position within the force. That this is not the way it happens in practice was frequently reiterated in terms that highlight the dangers of becoming known as a troublemaker.

*[Grievances] are not confidential. What happens is ... I know somebody who has just recently put a grievance in, and everybody knows why she did it, and what's happened ... nothing is confidential in this job, to be honest. No. Rumour controls things, things get out, they might be a bit distorted but there's always an element of truth in the rumours. (WPC, 4 years service, tape 1:16)*

The assumption that rumours and truth are necessarily linked in some accurate way indicates one of the reasons officers avoid the visibility associated with lodging a formal grievance. Once a rumour is put about it is not possible to retract or effectively control any of the interpretations and assumptions. The threat of a black mark, or rumours that might damage an officer's standing with colleagues and in the hierarchy, have a severely disciplinary effect, with many officers electing to censor their own complaints and dissatisfactions rather than attract such negative visibility when they use the grievance procedure.

*[It was suggested that I could] always take a grievance procedure, and go and see somebody of a higher rank, but then I wouldn't get the job anyway. Because I'd be blackballed wouldn't I? ... you can't get 'round this old boys' network you know. There are those that fit, and those that don't. If you rock the boat ... . (MPC, 30 years service, Federation Representative, tape 23)*

It is highly significant that ethnic minority officers and women officers are 'accused' of using the grievance procedure to somehow subvert the system for their own gain. The example below illustrates the extent to which membership of either minority group in the police organization attracts almost automatic negative visibility.

*It seems to be the Asians and the women who always use the grievance procedure ... when you first hear about it, everybody has a moan, and then forgets about it, but it always seems to be the same people that are using it. (MPC, 7 years service, tape 25:17)*

Those who are seen to attract negative attention through using the grievance procedure are deemed to be the problem, and the minority group to which they are seen to belong becomes the label through which that problem is described and defined by those in the 'mainstream'. Ethnic minority status, gender and sexual orientation are three of the labels readily attached to individuals with disciplinary intent. While this is clearly not force policy, the punitive use of labeling on the basis of status group has the effect of discouraging these officers from using the grievance procedure.

It seems that the risks of using the procedure are unknown, but could have significant, negative implications in the future. Officers display no confidence in the procedure, or any belief that it is designed or intended for their protection.

*I personally wouldn't feel comfortable using [the grievance procedure] ... It depends what your grievance is about. I think it could be used both ways, it could benefit you if you stood up for yourself, but it could be to your detriment. (MS, 8 years service, tape 33:22)*

It is worth considering the impact that race and gender have for members of ethnic minority groups, and for women, in terms of visibility and difference. Uniforms, numbers, uniformity and conformity are the norm, and a significant emphasis is placed on 'fitting in'. Having a 'face that fits' is emphasized. Anything 'other' than the norm (white and male), attracts visibility regardless of performance or ability to do the job.

Belonging to an ethnic minority group appears to invoke certain assumptions about ability to fit into the organization and to the job, based on visible difference and the heightened visibility in an organization in which standing out in the crowd, and fitting into the crowd, are both highly significant factors. The quote below exemplifies the tension in this for ethnic minority officers.

*The Sergeant, he's a good lad. We all like him. But it doesn't stop people thinking he's got where he is because of his colour. (MPC, 7 years service, tape 25:18)*

The distinction between rumour, suggestion, and truth seems to be entirely fluid, with categories, labels, and visible characteristics such as race and gender apparently more 'reliable' indicators of events than any other version. The crude level of stereotyping as a means of organizing and operating in the organization is significant.

The experience of an Asian woman officer suggests that fears of retribution are well founded. Two years prior to the current research, she filed a formal grievance against a number of male officers at her previous station, a process which rendered her highly visible in the force. Although her racial harassment grievance was successful, she expressed concerns that she has

been labeled a 'troublemaker' by the rank and file since then. Despite the support of more senior officers in pursuing and executing her formal grievance, she no longer feels that it is worth using the official channels to resolve even extreme problems like racial harassment. In her case, she is doubly 'visible' by virtue of her race and her sex. Since then she has been the target of continued serious sexual harassment, by a fellow constable. She opted to remain silent rather than make herself visible, and thereby vulnerable to further harassment, and it was only by accident that the Superintendent at her station was informed of the incident by another officer present at the time.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the negative consequences of visibility described above, it is at the same time entirely necessary for an individual to make themselves visible to those officers in more senior positions who have decision making power with regard to allocating training courses and job experience, all of which are crucial in the process of career building in the force.

One effective means of gaining visibility and recognition of the organizationally necessary kind is through having some informal access to influential senior officers. For men, this is more likely than not to take place in the context of sport:

*I spoke to the Deputy Chief this morning because he is Chairman of the force sports club, of which I am secretary. I rang up and addressed a query to do with the sports club, and then he asked me about work. He probably wouldn't have rung me up to ask me. (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:7)*

The notion of being visible is clearly complex with different consequences ensuing, depending on the circumstances of visibility. As the example below illustrates, junior officers responded highly positively to the incumbent DCC and ACC because they took the time to be seen by lower ranking officers, and even more to the point, being seen on occasion to do

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<sup>12</sup> The Deputy Chief Constable of the force was at first sceptical of the researcher's questions about mistrust of the grievance procedure. However, he acknowledged that he was shocked at the level of distrust and fear exemplified in this particular case.



operational police work from time to time, the likes of which normally ascribed to the lower ranks.

*Certainly the DCC and the ACC are both what you would describe as visible people in the organization ... I think it makes a lot of difference to morale and quite a difference to motivation. You're far more likely to accept something if you know the individual that's written the document as opposed to it just being a piece of paper that's come out. (MI, 25 years service, tape 38:18)*

One Superintendent was quite certain that the visibility he gained for himself early on in his career, partly through fortuitous association with two high profile investigations, was significant in paving the way for his advancement:

*Certainly I had one or two celebrated cases as a PC which got my name known by the senior officers, as a result of that I got an early opportunity in CID. (M Supt. 19 years service, tape 43:3)*

While many officers expressed concern at the apparently indelible visibility of the written word of an appraisal, more senior officers were quite clear that they wanted the visibility an appraisal can offer, and the opportunity for personal recognition by the most senior officers in the organization:

*The ACC should find the time to do appraisals for all the Superintendents as the first line manager. (M Supt. 19 years service, tape 43:17)*

Other officers, also bent on career progression for themselves, bemoaned their lack of visibility in particular types of police work, purely because it was not possible to attract the necessary attention and recognition that is required if an officer is to take the step up the promotional ladder.

*Now I see very little of the Superintendent and Chief Inspector down here [in the cell block]. I don't like that because I like to keep them aware that I'm here ... you can get overlooked, and I think it does help if you are in their eye all the time because they are giving you thought constantly. (MS, 8 years service, tape 33:4)*

For officers with career progress in mind, the appraisal provides them with an opportunity to draw attention to themselves, and to be given some sort of recognition of their own personal success in the job. The officer continued as follows:

*I'm looking to keep on moving on. I don't want to be given an 'okay' [in an appraisal]. That's no good to me really. I want [comments like] "showing good progress". I want to be assessed, making ground towards the next rank ... how are they going to assess me, because I'm down here [in the cells] by myself? (MS, 8 years service, tape 33)*

The emphasis on visible results is a direct consequence of the emphasis on monitoring and measurement, discussed earlier. Achieving results that have an impact on prioritized organizational statistics is one way of attracting that visibility.<sup>13</sup>

*If you're achieving results the way they [senior officers] want the results, because you use your initiative with regard to burglaries for example, you get a result there, they're obviously going to be pleased because it's going to help their figures, it's going to help them reach their long-term targets. I think it does earn you brownie points. (MS, 8 years service, tape 33:4)*

Achieving visibility is linked directly with notions of evidence discussed earlier. The burden of proof once again falls on the officer, in terms of having to provide some evidence of work done during the day, and results achieved, if senior officers are to believe or recognize that

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<sup>13</sup> The fairly crude principle of the 'carrot and stick' is an implicit element of management in the police organization. Recent emphasis on the notion of career in the police service, as evidenced in the existence of fast track accelerated promotion schemes, indicates an increased emphasis on career as management control mechanism. Those that chose not to pursue the 'carrot' of potential promotion remove much of the potential for sanction on which the 'new' management emphasis relies. Self-discipline and self-development practices rely

work has been done at all.

*You needed to do a certain amount to show that you could do it. It's hard for us to know that they can do it if they don't actually go and do it, unless you're actually there with them ... If you have been out there all day and haven't anything to show for it, you come back in and you've not issued any tickets and it looks as if you've done nothing but just drink tea all day long. (MS, 14years service, tape 36:14)*

One officer expressed concern that it was quite possible to do an entire day of work, without having some visible evidence of that work to show to senior officers,

*You can spend all day and have nothing to show for it sometimes in the police force. (MI, 25 years service, tape 37:10)*

That many duties performed by officers as a matter of routine do not attract recognition from senior officers as a consequence of their non-measurability leaves some officers in effect invisible. This can create frustration, reinforcing officers' anxieties to be visible to senior officers.

*No, those particular problems [briefing officers] don't come into performance indicators, they're not shown, but they take up a lot of time. (MI, 27 years service, tape 41:17)*

Alternatively, one significant consequence of the necessity for officers to render themselves in verifiable terms, is the impact this may have on the choices they make whilst conducting their policing duties, as exemplified below:

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to a large extent on individual officers wanting the rewards associated with compliance.

*They want figures now. I went to a house where the ex-boyfriend had appeared, and bust his way in and wouldn't leave. My mate was all for arresting him. I said no, we'd talk to him first and give him the opportunity to leave. It took five, ten minutes ... he left. We got out and driving away [my mate] says: "We could have had an arrest". That's what he's after: Figures. Now if the government want that, if the gaffers want that, they're going to make a rod for their own backs, because they are going to alienate us totally. (MPC, 30 years service, Federation Representative, tape 23:16)*

The implication here is that the alienation is likely to increase officers' instrumentalism and manipulation of the figures. The potential problems are recognized by more senior ranking officers, and is not merely the disgruntlement of a long service officer:

*There is a danger that we're moving into this realm of everything being performance related, or statistics and data being used to judge everybody's performance. It's not necessarily a good thing. There are all kinds of ways of dealing with situations. You have an enormous amount of discretion ... if we can smooth things over and everyone goes away happy, that's just as good a result as arresting people. (MI, 9 years service, fast track, tape 39)*

This final example underlines the contradictions that arise for officers out of the managerial drive for assessment and other job demands for exercising discretion in applying the law and keeping the peace.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to note that the three 'categories' of officers' interactions and responses presented in this chapter are not discrete, but reflect sometimes interrelated strands of a more complex set of practices. Furthermore, definition, reputation, and visibility are also linked in that they are all expressions of knowledge practices, or more specifically, of power/knowledge practices at work in the police organization.

Consequently, the analysis in this chapter further develops earlier discussions of the power/knowledge concept proposed by Foucault. The exploration of practices that involve visibility, definition, and reputation, extends the literature on surveillance in organizations beyond notions of panoptic surveillance. The analysis has shown the many ways in which power/knowledge, more broadly conceptualized, informs and gives shape to some of the practices that surround management policies like the grievance procedure. The data set out in the chapter have also explored some of the complex interrelationships that exist in practices associated with management policies, officers' discretion on the job, gender and race. Accordingly, the analysis has illustrated that policy implementation, no matter how well intended, is shaped by broader organizational power-related practices and discourses, many of which are informed, and give shape to, officers' concerns to negotiate identity. In particular, the examples illustrate the ways in which organizational assessment practices exacerbate impression management, careerism and often defensive orientations by officers with regard to aspects of their identity.

The detailed analyses presented in this chapter have shown not only the extent to which concerns with the negotiation of identity concerns and status interacts with, and shapes, power practices. They have also shown something of the extent to which the nature of police work itself gives shape to officers' interactions with, and responses to, traditional and managerial practices. In an important sense, these responses and interactions reflect something of the range of action that might inform the way in which power and resistance in organizations is conceptualized. The details of the accounts outlined in this chapter suggest that officers are both actors and recipients in the power/knowledge discourse of the organization, and that resistance might be conceptualized in a non-episodic way. At the same time, the detailed accounts illustrate that some practices and hierarchical power differentials are reinforced and re-enacted so as to remain intact over time. These ideas are extended and

developed in the conclusion of this thesis. Before moving on to this, the final empirical chapter will now concentrate on the gendered nature of certain organizational power relations, and the ways in which women officers in particular coped with these added pressures on them.

## Chapter 10

### Coping with 'canteen culture'

An exploration of power practices in the police organization must consider the specifically gendered form in which some power asymmetries are expressed. Some of the historical origins of these asymmetries were outlined in Chapter 6, yet, the present research data shows that women officers continue to deal on a daily basis with a range of asymmetrical power practices that their male colleagues do not face.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will highlight the extent to which women in the police have to cope with gender differences, in addition to other competing hierarchies and expressions of power in the organization. It explores some of the key ways in which they respond to, and actively manage gender in, the prevailing (white) male culture of the organization. The exploration of the ways women cope with police 'canteen culture' further develops the argument that has developed in this thesis about the importance of subjectivity, and related identity negotiation, in practices of power.

Before considering responses specific to the policewomen interviewed, this chapter will introduce a range of studies of the dilemmas faced by women in a variety of male-dominated settings. It will introduce the few studies that begin to explore the ways in

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<sup>1</sup> This is not to ignore recent arguments that insist on problematizing notions of masculinity in organizations, or to conflate 'gender asymmetries' with 'female asymmetries'. However, given the intensity of the 'macho culture' in the police outlined in earlier chapters, the often-ignored details of women officers' experiences in that culture require specific analytical attention.

which women officers cope in the police organization. This chapter will consider in some detail some of the ways in which women officers respond to and interact with the additional constraints imposed on them by virtue of being female in the police organization.<sup>2</sup> To that end, the empirical analysis in this chapter will focus in turn on the responses that entail 1) detachment; 2) managing hierarchies 3) seeking neutrality. The analysis will also highlight some of the consequences of these responses, and will consider some of the contradictions that arise for the women concerned, and for women officers in general.

### **Women in male-dominated occupations**

A number of recent studies have highlighted the problematic position of women who work in male-dominated occupations. The body of work begins to suggest that it is necessary to explore some of the ways in which women interact with, and perhaps inadvertently reinforce certain dominant male cultural practices. One example of this genre is that by Fine (1987). In his analysis of women working as cooks in the traditionally male environment of restaurant kitchens, he sets out to find out how women *adjust to* these male norms and practices, often expressed as sexualized banter. However, while the intention is worthwhile, the work is of limited use because Fine stops short of engaging critically with much of the material. For example, in defending sexist banter, he ignores the potential for exercising control through humour and banter. In his words: 'it is reasonable to assume that most men felt no unfriendly intent in their joking' (1987: 134).

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<sup>2</sup> In his study of police work, Manning (1977) introduces the notion of an audience on whose behalf 'performance' is carried out. He uses the dramatic metaphor as a device for exploring the symbolic significance of police work, and in so doing, suggests that some actions are performed in response to specific expectations or dramatic settings. He approaches police work as though it is a series of dramatic events. He draws a distinction between the public ritual of police social control, and the contrasting 'private almost situational construction of everyday lives' (Manning, 1977:10).



His conclusion that it is necessary for women to learn and 'accept the boys' rules' (1987: 145) in order to survive in such environments must certainly be only one strand of a far more complex picture. There are, however, a number of more critical and insightful studies upon which to draw when exploring the experience of women in 'male occupations'.

In recent years studies have begun to consider not only differences between women and men in non-traditional jobs, but have extended the analysis to consider also differences between women in those contexts. One example is provided by Sheppard (1989), in her study of women managers. She argues that women, *rather than men*, adopt strategies of managing gender, and she presents a detailed and complex analysis of these practices. The women in her study are seen to adopt strategies of survival in organizations that are the *direct outcome* of their being female in a male defined environment. In particular, she proposes two strategies through which women manage gender: 1) *blending in*, which means in practice remaining 'feminine enough' while being 'businesslike enough' (1989:146); and 2) *claiming a rightful place*, through which women are more inclined to challenge gendered assumptions in the particular workplace. The first strategy places the responsibility for maintaining smooth gender relations with individual women, and reduces the apparent significance of gender and sexuality at work (e.g. Hearn, Sheppard, Tancred-Sheriff & Burrell, 1989). The second strategy does not require that women accommodate prevailing male-defined expectations and behaviours. Sheppard usefully highlights the centrality of sexuality and gender in the strategies adopted by women managers, and links these explicitly to issues of power and control in the workplace.

Yount's (1991) analysis of strategies for managing sexual harassment adopted by women coal miners is another example of a study in which differences between women working

in a male-dominated environment are considered. The women in her study are categorized as Ladies, Flirts, or Tomboys respectively. It could be argued, however, that Yount places too much emphasis on the personalities of the women miners, at the expense of considering these strategies for getting on and surviving in the particular work context. These categories might be more usefully presented as responses or strategic behaviours rather than personality-based traits. A more critical approach is useful as a means through which to explore the pervasiveness of the job and the dominant culture in shaping individual responses and action, thus escaping accusations of over-emphasizing personality in shaping responses.

Zimmer (1986) writes that the data from her interviews with women prison guards made it clear that it was not possible to present a picture of one stereotypical female guard. While these women did have important common experiences, they exhibited different strategies of survival in this non-traditional occupation for women. She proposes three such strategies, the first being the *institutional role*, in which women attempt to work in all the varied types of jobs, and adopt a rule and procedure bound approach. Their wish is to perform the job on an equal footing as men. The second strategy, more commonly adopted, she calls the *modified role*. Those who adopt this strategy generally regard women as unable to do the job as well as male guards, and oppose initiatives to introduce more equality between male and female guards. Other women chose an *inventive role*, viewing their femaleness as an advantage as it provides skills that male guards do not have, such as intuition, communication, and ability to win respect. They rely on developing close relations with inmates, and with male colleagues in order to get the job done. While acknowledging differences between women guards, Zimmer is attempting to present ideal type universal categories, rather than presenting detailed differences

between women.

The influence of Hochschild's (1973) categorization of *defeminized* and *deprofessionalized* women in studies of women in male-dominated work environments is clear. Martin (1979) applied these extremes of a continuum to her study of role dilemmas and choices faced by female police officers in the United States. *Policewomen*, in her view, attempt to gain acceptance within the dominant group through professionalism, often trying harder to succeed, adopting a low profile, and not identifying with other women. The similarities with Sheppard's 'professional' women managers is apparent. In particular, these *Policewomen* adopt a strong law enforcement position, stress their loyalty to policing, and emphasize assertiveness and professionalism. In particular, these women do not regard their work as in any way threatening to their feminine identity. *Policewomen*, on the other hand, '[accept] the men's invitation to function as a nominal equal while actually functioning as a junior partner' (1979: 315). This group includes those women who are disinterested in their work other than as necessary income and who behave in a 'traditionally feminine way' (1979: 320). It also includes women who are involved in their job, but either lack assertiveness, are troubled by discrimination, and are concerned to remain ladylike at work. Martin ascribes a service orientation to many of these women, as opposed to the crime fighting perspective of their 'opposites'.

Implicit in a number of these studies is the extent to which women are engaging actively in the negotiation of gendered identities as a means of coping with some of the day-to-day demands of the male-dominated environments in which they work. It would seem that the task of managing, and responding to, gendered power asymmetries in these contexts rests with women, rather than men.

This categorization appears in a number of more recent studies of policewomen conducted in Britain. Having conducted extensive research to assess the impact of the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 (SDA) within the police service, Jones (1986) concludes that a vast divide remains between equal opportunities policy and its practice. Her research findings reveal the differential treatment afforded men and women in recruitment, deployment and promotion practices. She also describes in some detail the beliefs, rationalizations and attitudes of male officers, both old and young, which impact negatively on the role of policewomen: i.e. police work is considered to be unfeminine while women officers are widely seen as having a short term commitment to work, to be too emotional, physically unsuitable and likely to create discipline problems.

Jones' study usefully highlights the complex social processes through which gender relations in the police are reproduced. In particular, she shows how women can become entrapped within various vicious circles of sex discrimination (Jones, 1986: 109, 141). The empirical detail, however, is not matched by the depth of her theoretical explanations for the persistence of these gender divisions ten years after the SDA. While Jones provides detailed evidence of the extent to which gender inequalities still persist in the working practices of the police force, she does not directly address explanations and analysis of their underlying dynamics or possible internal contradictions and tensions. She relies on a brief description of Martin's (1979) categorization of *Policewomen* and *Policewomen* to explain 'the working solutions women officers adopt in order to function in a male-dominated occupational culture' (1986: 170). Jones does raise the question as to whether equivalent patterns of behaviour might be found for *Policemen* / *Policemen*, but decides that this is not a worthwhile endeavour on the grounds that 'one wonders whether the impact of holding a minority viewpoint among male peers in a male-dominated organization has quite the same consequences for a man as it does for a

woman' (1986: 175).

Heidensohn (1992) also draws upon Martin's categorization in reviewing some of the controversies around the notion of policing styles, and the place of gender within such analyses (e.g. Reiner, 1985; Remington, 1981). In her analysis of these policewomen's life histories, (1992: 117), Heidensohn presents eight different 'concepts in a career' derived from the British sample. These concepts are not explicitly presented as *strategies* of coping in a traditionally male-dominated work environment, although a number of them might be read as such. For example, professionalism was a key concept for many of the women, as was the concept of policewomen as pioneers in a man's world.<sup>3</sup>

Brewer (1991) draws upon the Greek myth of Hercules, Hyppolyte and the Amazons as a metaphor to describe the roles that policewomen adopt in order to cope with the 'Hercules-like' masculinity of the police force, in this case the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Brewer lists four particular strategies that policewomen might adopt in order to manage their gender: 1) giving as good as you receive; 2) suffering in silence; 3) defensive humour; and 4) being 'one of the boys'. These are presented as background material to the description of the Greek myth, and are not explored in any great detail for inconsistencies, consequences or contradictions. This is left for Brown (1993) to explore, and she successfully extends the discussion of Brewer's 'one of the boys' strategy, highlighting the potential for policewomen who engage in this strategy to be marginalized by both men and other women. However, Brewer usefully points out that gender identity is a *managed accomplishment* in this work environment. In describing the Hyppolyte

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<sup>3</sup> Heidensohn (1992) argues that it is necessary to consider how policewomen cope with the job, as opposed to how they cope with policemen. This thesis would argue that it is to some extent artificial to separate the two in practice.

Role adopted by some police women (i.e. retention and display of stereotypical femininity) Brewer does explain one important consequence: that such behaviour encourages 'masculine displays', and reinforces the dominant culture, one which allows sexual harassment and innuendo. The Amazon Role (i.e. adopting 'male' behaviours) is rather less explained or explored. While the argument points to the strategies adopted by police women as significant in themselves, it could be argued that the metaphor is constrained by its very neatness. The strategies adopted by police women appear to be more complex and contradictory than suggested by Brewer.

This chapter will turn now to a detailed consideration of some of the ways in which women police officers interact with, and respond to, the highly masculinist culture in which they work. Data in the ensuing analysis will, as before, be presented thematically where possible, to protect the identities of the women concerned. In some instances, where women are either very senior officers, or from an ethnic minority group, it is almost impossible to protect the respondents' identities. Presenting data on those most vulnerable in the competing and often opaque hierarchies at work in organizations remains a practical, methodological and ethical problem. It is hoped that the inclusion of their valuable contributions does not lead in some way to further undermining of their respective positions or identities in the organization. Their insights, sometimes gained at great personal expense, are most telling of the complexities that surround the apparent intransigence of the dominant masculine culture in the police. As in previous chapters, the categories set out below are not discrete, and women might engage in a number of these responses and interactions at a given time.

## Disengagement and detachment

One of the most frequently deployed responses to the dominant male culture adopted by women officers involved a combination of disengagement and detachment,<sup>4</sup> whereby they in effect removed themselves from aspects of police work. These responses include: 1) opting out of direct competition with policemen and dominant notions of 'real' police work; 2) adopting a stance that was anti positive action; and 3) explicit distancing of the self from other police women. The data presented in this section will illustrate and explore female officers' accounts in which these responses are evident.

For the last five years the woman Constable cited below has been a Community Beat Officer (CBO), a role she particularly enjoys. She has no intention of seeking promotion. She describes her job as a Community Beat Officer (CBO) as follows:

*I meet lots of different people. [The job] is varied, but there is mundanity about it [...]. I'm the village bobby and I've been doing that for five and half years. [I have ] always got things to do, not major things, not big crime. [I] sort out things that might turn more serious later, domestics and little insy winsy things that are problems to them. I work on my own.*  
(WPC, 8 years service, tape 3:1)

The woman Constable cited below, on the other hand, has less experience. She enjoys a range of police work, and may at a later stage pursue promotion. For the moment she has

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<sup>4</sup> Detachment from socializing, and from working with others on the shift was also notable amongst a few of the long serving male uniformed Constables, particularly those approaching retirement age. Retirement from the force typically takes place after thirty years service. For many officers, this might mean retiring at the age of 50, on a full pension. The retirement package is often cited by officers as a strong incentive to remain with the force, despite an often encountered rhetoric of intense dissatisfaction with the job and / or organization. Lower ranking officers apparently elect to retire as soon after their 30 years service has been earned, while more senior officers might stay on longer; the incumbent Chief Constable being a case in point. The difference may reflect the difference in job description: senior officers have largely administrative responsibilities, while officers lower down the command hierarchy are still engaged in active 'leg work', and tied to the demands of anti-social shift work.

opted to prepare herself for the role of CBO, as a direct consequence of her age and sex.

She explains her preference for solitary community work as follows:

*I recently had a woman Sergeant and I got on very well with her. I worked three weeks with her and it was absolutely lovely for me, you know, getting into cars and talking about girlie girlie things [laughs]. Because the lads, you know, they are young and full of life, and they don't want to talk about me and my boring old tat. So I tend to have to sit and listen to them. So it was nice, but I am very much alone now, and I can see myself eventually working on my own. That's why I volunteered immediately to walk the beat. (WPC, 18 months service, tape 6:8)*

The 'lads' are accorded license as lively individuals, and she marginalises her own position through labeling *herself* as 'boring'. She reinforces the dominant masculine culture, and the pre-eminent place accorded male officers within it. She describes her vision of her future career as:

*I'd like to be the CBO there one day. I'd like to walk the beat there for two years. I live in the village. I like the community. I like the Neighbourhood watch schemes. I like all the committee meetings. I love doing the things at the school like Cycling Proficiency and, you know, Danger Stranger, and things like that. All that sort of stuff would suit me down to the ground [...]. I'm just not a fierce person, [emphasis added] I'm just not going to go out and grab an arrest because I am hungry for arrests. This job isn't all about arrests, this job is about speaking to people. (WPC, 18 months service, tape 6:14)*

Both women value work that is markedly different from the idealized definitions of 'real policing' detailed earlier, and the first example in particular seems to reinforce the belief that domestic incidents are not 'big crime'. Their response to the prevalent definitions of 'real police work' is to distance themselves from it, and signal that they have settled for



'lesser' work not valued within the 'canteen culture'.

It is significant that a number of new CBO posts had recently been created in this police area. According to the Superintendent in charge he had largely resorted to 'firm persuasion' in order to fill the posts. The 'little insy winsy things' prized by the first female police officer, and the committee meetings and cycling proficiency tests enjoyed by the second, are not regarded as 'real' police work by many of their male colleagues. Despite this, both women see themselves as being on a level playing field with the men. The consequence of both their responses is the maintenance of definitions of 'real work', and their own isolation and marginalization within the organization. The strategy of non-engagement implicit in distancing is apparent with regard to promotion in the next example:

*I've never sought promotion, and I've always just got what I wanted anyway. (WPC, 8 years service, tape 3:2)*

What is revealed here is that she has opted out of competition for promotion. More significant perhaps is the fact that what both of these women wanted is a position that is not sought after by most male colleagues. In the first example, the woman Constable presents her current position as an achievement, when in practice there was no competition for the job. In effect they have both 'opted out', thereby allowing themselves not to engage in a number of the discourses and practices of 'real police work'. The relative isolation of community policing in a small sub-station may yet prevent the woman in the second example from gaining skills in other areas of police work, skills which are necessary for pursuing promotion in the future.

Another 'strategy' which both women, and other women officers, adopt is the denial of asymmetric masculine / feminine hierarchies of power<sup>5</sup> in the force, and indeed in society at large. Each relies on an essentialist, biological explanation to justify perceived differences between male and female officers. One woman officer describes this as follows:

*We are different, aren't we? Biologically different. I know on the whole they are physically stronger than us. But we have so many different qualities and there are some areas where we just shine in and some areas where they shine. We need to help each other. (WPC, 18 months service, tape 6:25)*

Another woman officer stresses the usefulness of gender differences as she goes about her duties, although offers sometimes contradictory statements in this regard:

*I don't think being a woman officer makes it any different, [laughs] but not being a man I couldn't say. I think it depends on the woman. I am very very anti all this positive discrimination. I won't be called Ms. I can't bear it when they say 'Police Constable'. Some people want a woman, some people want a man [to deal with their case]. I think people should know who they are talking to. It [sex equality] is something that will come naturally, and that we shouldn't rush it. (WPC, 8 years service, tape 3:1)*

Her discourse heightens difference between men and women on the one hand, and yet simultaneously denies difference on the other. It also expresses criticism of women, and

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<sup>5</sup> Collinson (1994) identifies two resistance strategies as examples in his discussion of power and subjectivity. These are *distance*, and *persistence*, respectively. He regards the latter, which entails ongoing engagement with organizational practices, as the more effective form of resistance. In the present study, 'responses' is used instead of 'resistance' strategies, in recognition of the complexity implicit in individual actions in organizations. Responses is less tied to the adversarialism implicit in 'resistance', yet, the term also suggests further complexities. The term implies less rational intent than 'strategy', and is therefore preferred, as discussed in Chapter 8.

an idealization of 'natural' and 'emergent' gender relations. In questioning 'all this positive discrimination', she denies the possibility of asymmetrical power relations between genders within the force. Women who might pursue 'preferential treatment' on the basis of gender, are strongly criticized, and accused of somehow having a personality or sexual drive defect:

*I feel very very resentful that as a woman you might get preferential treatment, and I'm sure it happens. Not so much now because there are more women in the force, but certainly I've seen it in the past and I think it's disgraceful. I think you should go on your own merits. And if you have an inadequacy in your personality, if you feel you need to do something, or you want to be a nun, then go and do it. I feel very very strongly [about this]. (WPC, 8 years service, tape 3:2)*

This comment suggests that she is against positive action on behalf of women. Being opposed to action implies a level of collusion with dominant power structures. The complexity of this collusion is made clearer in this same Constable's responses to sexual harassment, where once again she engages in a form of denial:

*There's obviously sexism being the only policewoman. I'm raunchy, not that, I'm suggestive. Everybody knows that I am in a happy relationship. The boys are, I call them boys, because we're, well, not quite like family, but we get on like a house on fire, I'll have a cuddle or a hug, we tease each other. Nobody has ever stepped out of line [laughs]. That probably says something about me - they wouldn't want to! It's give and take, we both do it. Sometimes things are very suggestive but they are not meant, on my part anyway. Sexism wise I've never considered it, I can always handle what comes up [laughs] that's a very unfortunate expression! (WPC, 8 years service, tape 3:5)*

She has developed this strategy of collusion in a number of ways. She positions herself as

an affectionate sister within the shift. Throughout the male police officers are presented as (sometimes naughty) little boys who are to be humoured. She insists that engaging in sexualized banter is all harmless fun, and regards it as her responsibility to manage such interactions. She heatedly and repeatedly denies any gendered discrimination in the force. The police 'family'<sup>6</sup> are not to be criticized or chastised too harshly, and in particular, the 'boys' and their practices are to be 'protected' from the 'unfair' criticisms of outsiders and feminist women.

Both of these women present responses that clearly consist of a number of themes, not all of which are intentional, explicit, or indeed coherent. Their respective practices of distancing, and the intertwined elements of denial and collusion, may work within the protected confines of their respective small rural stations, characterized by low staff turnover, but it is questionable how effective they might be if the women themselves were moved from one shift to another, or to a larger station with higher staff turnover and less occasion for familial familiarity.

An example from one long serving female CID officer, illustrates the effects and consequences of responses that involve distancing. She claims that different rules operate for men and women in the police:

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<sup>6</sup> Young (1993) draws a close analogy between notions of family and the police force in his analysis of police culture

*There is the element of having to prove yourself more as a woman. Or, you are not selected to do certain jobs because you are a female. It's not openly said, but you know that it is really the case. You think: "I could have done that as well as he can". It could be, say, that one particular person is in custody, he might be a bit violent, or he might be a very good criminal [sic], and I 've experienced it that men have been selected to interview him as a result. I've felt that's unfair. (WDC, 14 years service, tape 9:5)*

She has entered the specialist world of CID work, which is regarded as having superior status in terms of the popular definitions of 'the job'.<sup>7</sup> However, for more than half her career she has chosen to operate outside of the mainstream of CID work, and associate herself with 'women's' work. Half of her police career has been devoted to dealing with sexual offences and child abuse:

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<sup>7</sup> CID was only established as a separate department in 1878 (Reiner, 1992:78). Ironically, because of public suspicion about the police acting as 'spies' within the community (as explored in Chapter 1), the idea of plainclothes policemen was resisted for many years after the establishment of the 'new' police (Emsley, 1991). Reiner cites the Metropolitan police's own historian, who concluded as follows: 'it is beyond argument that by the summer of 1922 the CID had become a thoroughly venal private army' (Ascoli, 1979, p. 210, in Reiner, 1992:78)

*I really enjoyed that. It sounds a bit weird if you say you enjoyed that sort of work, but I did. A lot of the time you are frustrated because you don't get a result through the courts, of lot of offenders get away with it, because obviously the policy was not to put a child into the witness box to give evidence. But it was rewarding to see the children that had the guts to talk about it [...]. So in a way it was rewarding because at least you've done something to try and help the child. (WDC, 14 years service, tape 9:2)*

A consequence of her choice to specialize in this way in previous years is that she is still associated with 'women's work', despite being a full member of CID where 'women's work' is patently not valued. She does not question these practices:

*A lot of time they [searches of premises] are done in the early morning and people are in bed. It's just more applicable to have women there when people are getting up, with children there as well. (WDC, 14 years service, tape 9:3)*

This officer is not a member of the newly constituted separately functioning Family Protection Unit, yet is still kept from some of the operational work within CID. She is often quite separate from the rest of the shift. The day of her interview was a case in point. All the other officers (male) had been seconded to another station to undertake a murder inquiry. The only woman CID officer at this station, had been left to 'mind the 'phones'. Her position is not unique, as has been noted elsewhere. The Equal Opportunities Commission Report (1990) found unofficial quotas in CID departments, and Fielding (1994) remarks that women in CID are likely to be given stereotypically female work. Clearly some of the underlying dynamics are still at work. In the case of the woman cited above, not only does she actively distance herself through this strategy of seeking 'women's work', she simultaneously colludes with the imbalance in the gendered hierarchy. This, at a time when the majority of her male colleagues had been called

away to work on a high profile murder investigation. While the organization can claim to have a woman in this CID department, in practice she occupies a marginal position within the shift. Her continued association with domestic 'caring' work reinforces her marginal position within CID, and serves to reinforce stereotypical gendered roles within the department.

Marginalization and potential isolation are two unintended consequences that link these different distancing strategies. The women may offer different explanations and interpretations of their distance from mainstream police work, but the consequences for each bear strong similarities. In effect, distancing serves to reinforce and contribute to what Young (1991) called structural marginalization of women in the police. Yet, Young's analysis seems over-deterministic. The responses described in this section indicate some of the ways in which women might inadvertently contribute to the very processes that undermine their status and influence in the police organization.

It is important at this point to stress that acknowledging women's 'collusion' in this way is *not* about 'blaming the victims' of discrimination. Highlighting some of the ways in which women's responses might exacerbate already asymmetrical hierarchies is, however, revealing of the power practices inherent in everyday practices in the organization. Detailed consideration of these responses also shows some of the subtle ways in which everyday practices should be scrutinised for unacknowledged assumptions and consequences.

### **Engaging with hierarchies**

In order to better understand the power practices that inform the gendered culture of the organization, it is useful to look at the sometimes problematic interplay between

gendered hierarchies, formal positional power that is associated with different ranks, and the hierarchies inherent in the construction of different types of police work. The first case explores the contradictions that arise from a response that relies on imposing hierarchical authority in order to counteract gendered power imbalances. The second example considers the case of a woman Sergeant who engages with competing power hierarchies by emphasizing and investing in an explicitly *feminine* discourse.

The most senior woman officer in this force has achieved the rank of Chief Inspector. She has been particularly tenacious in successfully pursuing promotion.<sup>8</sup> After twenty years in the force, her current role is to take charge of the day-to-day operations of an urban police sub-division. Operational decisions such as deployment of staff and resources are often her responsibility. She has a reputation and responsibility for discipline, and fulfils an entirely operational role. This is significant as 'operational / action' work is highly regarded amongst police officers. She has experience of all departments and types of police work, and this is, by her own account, a great advantage. Control permeates her everyday experiences as she keeps a tight grip on operations.

Her reputation as a 'fearsome', 'bullying', 'tyrant' was repeated by many officers, so it was with some trepidation that the researcher arranged an interview. After a two hour interview it became apparent that much of that fear and uncertainty expressed by officers is to some extent the outcome of a strategy of control. She expressed this as follows:

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<sup>8</sup> As with many of the women interviewed, the Chief Inspector was extremely forthcoming during her interview, and presented gender concerns as an integral sub-theme of responses to many non-gender specific questions.



*[Discipline] is pretty easy for me because I have got a reputation as a disciplinarian. It has some payoffs ... You can also maintain discipline by challenging regularly. (senior woman officer, 20 years service, tape 13:13]*

Once again, labeling and reputation are actively managed processes. The Chief Inspector controls through fear, through the unexpected, and through episodic interventions. During other interviews it emerged that these often took the form of a formal summons to her office, followed by a 'bollocking', a loud telling off for incompetence.

What is interesting is that although references were sometimes made to senior male officers adopting similar disciplinarian tactics, it was only the Chief Inspector who was criticized for this quite so vehemently by male and female officers.<sup>9</sup> The question arises as to whether this discipline, or control, is resented in particular as it comes from a woman senior officer, or whether her 'bollocking' is indeed unfair. It may be a way that she 'compensates' as a senior woman officer in a male-dominated hierarchy. In her own words:

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<sup>9</sup> In their discussion of police culture as an explanation of excessive use of force by police officers over the public, Skolnick & Fyfe (1993:95) discuss some of the paradoxes of coercive power. Drawing on the work of others, they note that the stronger a reputation for being mean and tough, the less tough one actually has to be in practice.

*One of the biggest problems is if you're assertive as a woman, they see it as aggressive. They [male officers] see it as very unnatural and you're supposed to sit there and say nothing. I think they really feel threatened by a woman who says: "What are you doing that for?". And I am not talking about people lower than me only, I'm talking about Chief Superintendents... one [of them] makes comments like: "She's very confrontational isn't she!", at a meeting, with a horrible sneer on his face. (senior woman officer, 20 years service, tape 13:9)*

Woven into her strategy of control through discipline are a host of considerations about authority, power and gender, and it may be that a 'charm offensive' is not a strategy that a senior woman can adopt without having to consider the potential for sexual innuendo that may be read into such an approach. By contrast, the Superintendent cited in Case Study 1 in Chapter 7, engages openly in 'charm' tactics: overtly attempting to flatter during interviews, apparently free to exploit gender difference as an apparently positive and legitimate tool for influencing relations, and actively presenting himself as a non-traditional manager and man.

While the Chief Inspector does at some level 'have' control over discipline and operations in the area, it would seem that she is the subject of resistance in the form of often malicious, humour. In a work environment in which inclusion in the 'group' is highly valued, she is anything but included. This exclusion appears to operate from below, from men and women officers, and from the ranks above.

The case makes the point that if the woman in question were truly more hierarchically powerful, she might not be as pre-occupied with control. Control in this case represents an 'agentic' process that has to be realized, and constantly achieved. Despite having achieved a hierarchical position of power, she is largely excluded, because of her sex, from more informal and social aspects of police organizational life. She is therefore

somehow less powerful than a male contemporary might be, and relies heavily on formal control of those more junior to her, and dares not let down her guard with the majority of her own rank and above.

Being in a position of authority because of rank, enhanced by the credibility gained through 'real' policing experience, enables this most senior women officer in the force to exert varying degrees of control over more junior officers, be they male or female.<sup>10</sup> The exercise of that positional power, however, is significantly moderated and influenced by the reality that this is a powerful *woman*. That the interplay between gender and hierarchy is complex and sometimes contradictory, is further illustrated in the next example, albeit in markedly different ways.

In this example, a woman Sergeant illustrates a different set of responses to the competing organizational hierarchies bound up in the command structure, competing definitions of police work, and gender asymmetries. Her interactions and responses can be described as investing in difference. The Sergeant in question was interviewed twice during the course of the research, once for the initial MA study, and then again when she was randomly selected for the second study.<sup>11</sup> At the time of the first interview she described sexual harassment as a constant problem in the force. By the second interview she noted a marked change:

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<sup>10</sup> Heidensohn (1992) describes women gaining recognition through 'transformational' incidents, during which they are granted exceptional acceptance into the ranks of male officers.

<sup>11</sup> Her selection on two occasions is not that surprising given the relatively few number of women above the rank of Constable (see Appendix G).

*Really it is stopping. Yeah, it is still happening, it still happens in CID. That's why I wouldn't bother going that way because of the harassment and I couldn't be bothered with that. But in the Uniform, sexual harassment, I wouldn't say its nil, but its stopping a hell of a lot. But policemen have a tendency to forget. (WPS, 9 years service, tape 11:17)*

Despite the reported success of sexual harassment awareness training, and perceived improvements in the climate for equal opportunities in the force, she rules out the prospect of entering CID because of possible gender problems. In order to preserve some sense of her own definition of being a woman, she elects to distance herself from this particular battleground:

*It's very much a rugby club, even to the fact that the majority of them play rugby. [BK: so how do women fit into CID?] They don't. You have to be so hard, so really really hard. I mean, I couldn't fit in there. I couldn't drink like that, and I'm just not hard enough. [BK: You have to be able to drink a lot?] Oh yeah, all being totally masculine. I couldn't do it, I'm just not tough enough. To go in there I would have to lose so much that I hold dear to myself, I'd have to lose my identity. I'd have to lose a lot of my femininity. And I'm a very tactile. For example, one of the lads today just found out from his wife that she is pregnant. And that was a great big hug. Now you couldn't do that in CID. God no. (WPS, 9 years service, tape 11:10)*

In defining exactly what she meant by 'losing identity', she referred initially to a combination of symbols, such as clothing and makeup. This was, interestingly, closely followed by an assertion of difference between male and female officers. This difference was presented as an asset to women officers, who are able to make use of their social skills to make up for a lack of physical strength.

*I'll always wear my makeup, if I've got time I'll paint my nails, I never wear trousers. I'll always wear skirts [...] and I'm not afraid to say I'm female. I'm not afraid to say when I'm arresting somebody to say I haven't got the strength to get him up. I've got him down but I can't get him up. I'm not afraid when I'm in custody to say 'I've got violent prisoners in here, I need someone down here because I can't handle them' .... but I honestly think I get more respect by admitting I'm female. Admit is not the right word. [I am] not saying 'I'm sorry' but saying 'I'm a female'. (WPS, 9 years service, tape 11:20)*

The source of that respect in this particular case, is her male colleagues, rather than the public. She is not afraid of asserting, with some pride, that there are differences between men and women and the way they carry out some of their duties. Sacrificing or denying these 'differences' is the price that she is not prepared to pay to seek a position in CID, despite the reality that experience in CID is particularly important for hierarchical advancement.

The strategies of survival that this woman Sergeant uses must be viewed as contradictory in outcome, if not in intent. Her strategy of resistance to discrimination proved successful, when she filed and won a grievance against unfair promotion decisions. In the end, the Sergeant gained promotion. However, despite having achieved this 'success', in protecting some notion of her femininity, she may well be closing doors to further career advancement. It appears that engaging in the either/or battle, between feminine identity and CID work, she has had to make a choice. Her decision is informed by the view that it is somehow not possible to preserve her sense of feminine identity in the (stereotypically) masculine culture of CID. The example serves to underline the extent to which the asymmetries of gender hierarchies inform and are an integral part of power practices in the organization. It is in the details of practices such as these that the complexity of power

relations between and within hierarchies become apparent.

### **Seeking neutrality**

In this concluding section it is useful to consider a number of ways in which women officers attempt to minimize the impact of their gender difference (and race in the second example) in the workplace. This section details two forms of this response to the prevailing 'canteen culture' of the force, namely 1) by taking responsibility for managing gender relations, in some instances by being 'one-of-the-boys'; and 2) by seeking to compartmentalize aspects of work and private lives. Cockburn (1991) suggests that *masking* is often one of the coping strategies which women adopt when dealing with sexuality or harassment, which is reflected in the number of ways in which policewomen attempt to minimize the impact of gender (and race in the final example). These responses are largely intended to facilitate partial acceptance into the dominant male (white) 'canteen culture', or at least some space in which to carry out their job without being the focus of unwanted attention.<sup>12</sup>

Women in the force frequently seek to minimize their impact through engaging actively in the dominant masculine discourse. A few of the women interviewed present themselves as conditional members of their male-dominated shifts. As a consequence women seem to regard it as their responsibility to maintain and manage acceptance in the group, remaining constantly watchful of their own behaviour and impact, as illustrated in the following:

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<sup>12</sup> Minimizing impact also reflects many of the processes at work in the management of visibility outlined in earlier discussions.

*I get on with most people and try not to annoy anyone [...]. You get a lot of back chat, and it just depends on how you handle it. (WPC, 18 months service, tape 8 : post interview)*

Such a strategy appears to buy conditional acceptance from male colleagues. Acceptance is likely to terminate should the woman in question decide to voice any currently private objection to the ongoing 'banter' that permeates communications and interactions between shift members. Many police women are in active collusion with the dominant masculine culture as women work to present themselves as non-threatening and / or similar in a climate that values homogeneity.

One female interviewee went to great lengths to show off her numerous 'battle scars', which included a recent gash to her brow and nose. She is particularly proud of the reputation she has cultivated as a 'bruiser', both in and out of the station. This reputation was confirmed during an interview with a male colleague. One consequence of minimizing her femaleness, by her own admission and intent, is alienation from, and discounting of, other female officers. She is also entirely dependent on the male in-group's acceptance of her as a 'bloke'. It became clear in interviews with some of her male colleagues that while she is admired for being fearless, she is also heavily criticized for wanting to engage in a fight too readily. A number of them thought that she tries too hard to prove herself tough, and suggested that she is tolerated rather integrated into the predominantly male shift. Her 'strategy' potentially renders the officer vulnerable to the changing alliances and loyalties of the dominant group, in this case, her shift.

The details of the last case illustrate the extent to which one Asian woman Constable has responded to the dominant 'canteen culture' and the additional demands of racial hierarchies by attempting to compartmentalize her working life from her private life, and,

by seeking to avoid attracting attention of almost any sort in the organization.<sup>13</sup> She has been with the force for five years, and has recently taken on the CBO position for a busy town centre. While she enjoys this new challenge, she expressed doubts about her long term future in the police service. Two years prior to the interview she filed a formal grievance against a number of male officers at her previous station. Although her racial harassment grievance was successful, she expressed concerns that she has been labeled a 'troublemaker' by the rank and file since then. Despite the support of more senior officers in pursuing and executing her formal grievance, she no longer feels that it is worth using the official channels to resolve even extreme problems like racial harassment.

She has learned the hard way, through her own experience, that the consequences of attracting such attention include being socially ostracized from the shift, and the nagging doubt that support from fellow officers might be withheld in any number of ways. Constables are particularly dependent upon their shift for support and backup, both in the course of their duties and in the face of the command structure. She would rather tolerate continued racial harassment than make herself the focus of significant attention again. The attention she attracted to herself through the grievance procedure, and afterwards, has made her extremely cautious in a force that employs very few Asian officers. In effect, she is doubly visible, as an Asian officer, and as a female officer. In her case she is concerned not only with navigating the contradictions between gendered discourses and definitions of the job. Racial identity concerns constantly inform her experiences in this overwhelmingly white force.

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<sup>13</sup> Her example was used in Chapter 9, to illustrate the problems associated with attracting visibility in the organization. It is included in greater detail here to show some of the complexities and contradictions faced by the most visible and vulnerable individuals who are in effect 'outside' the dominant (white) 'canteen culture'.



She admits that she would not inform any officer if she felt she were being harassed, and claims to downplay the significance of ethnic differences when with her colleagues. A few months after the research interview took place she was subjected to severe racial and sexual harassment in the staff club. It took two weeks before any senior officer found out about the incident, at which point disciplinary action was initiated. Despite the harassment, she did not want to become involved, despite the severity of the incident. Senior officers pursued the case regardless.

She manages some of the contradictions and competing identity concerns by actively attempting to compartmentalize her 'public' from her 'private' lives. While walking the beat with the researcher she revealed that she is regarded with some suspicion within her own Asian community because she is a police officer. This was enacted when her brother approached her on the street. She very quickly moved away, only addressing him once they were hidden from public view. He was told off for talking to her in public. Later she explained that she fears her family might be harassed because of her job. The only way she is currently able to deal with these dilemmas is to hide the fact that she is a police officer as much as possible when she is off duty. While other officers also choose to keep their professional identity quiet on first meeting people, her attempt to compartmentalize her life is fed by fear of persecution.

While these different but overlapping strategies aimed at minimizing impact might protect her from harassment in and out of the force, both render her particularly isolated and potentially lacking support. Her intention might be to protect herself from harassment; the question that is raised is whether this might render her even more vulnerable and isolated in the future, both at work, and in her private life.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored women's various ways of coping with male-dominated occupations, first by reviewing some of the related literature on women in male-dominated organizations, and then by exploring how police women cope with the 'canteen culture' of the police. In particular, the chapter has examined disengagement and distancing, engaging with hierarchies, and seeking neutrality, as three responses that were readily apparent in this research. Disengagement and distancing, along with seeking neutrality, were the more commonly reflected strategies.

The chapter has also explored some of the contradictions and consequences of these different strategies, for the individual women officers concerned, and for the possible entrenchment of gendered power asymmetries of the 'canteen culture. However, it is worth re-iterating the point made earlier that this work does not seek to *blame* women officers for adopting any of these responses. Accordingly, in describing in some detail these police women's interactions with the 'canteen culture' the analysis in this chapter has sought to highlight the extent to which women are active agents in the management of gendered power-relations, albeit in ways that their male colleagues do not. However, highly masculine culture places severe constraints on their coping responses and strategies. The choices they sometimes face in negotiating the male-dominated organization appear to be limited. Nonetheless, women are at least to some extent active agents in the process of culture creation and re-creation in the organization, as are male officers, albeit in different ways.

The foregoing analysis of women's coping strategies further illustrates the extent to which identity concerns (here expressed in terms of female gender) are expressed and pursued as a means of influencing a range of power practices. The chapter has illustrated

some of the ways in which aspects of gender inform identity concerns, and that gender power practices are an important feature of other aspects of power in organizations. The complex interactions between formal rank hierarchy and gendered hierarchies are particularly useful illustrative examples.

The examples of some women's responses to the 'canteen culture' are not presented as if in isolation from other practices outlined in the previous three chapters. Indeed, themes such as visibility, difference, and distance permeate much of the data analysis, and so illustrate the complex and often interrelated nature of power practices in the police organization. The ways in which women officers respond to their lesser position within the prevailing masculine culture are not separate from other organizational practices. The analyses in this chapter have shown that while they are having to deal with gender power asymmetries, their responses are also shaped by the demands of the full range of other power practices at work in the organization.

Having explored, in these last three chapters, some of the important ways in which management practices, identity concerns, and gendered power asymmetries operate in the practice of the police organization, the following chapter will elaborate upon, and conclude the theoretical and empirical analyses of this thesis.

# Chapter 11

## Power in theory and practice

This thesis has sought to explore different theoretical conceptualizations of power, and has used the quasi-militaristic police organization as a means through which to assess some of the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical approaches to power.

The contemporary police service has proven to be a fascinating site of study, and has provided a perhaps unique focus for the exploration of sociological theories of power. Throughout, the challenge has been to balance complexity with simplicity. The challenge has been to: 1) attempt to do justice to the competing conceptualizations of power in social and organizational theory, within the demanding constraints of space and elegance; 2) to pay due attention to questions of epistemology and ontology, because assumptions about knowledge and ontology are crucial in shaping the limits and possibilities in any exploration of power; and 3) to organize the research data in a clear way whilst retaining a sense of the complexity of organizational practices. In the end, it is inevitable that the completed work is only a partial rendering of reality, interpreted, organized and shaped by the researcher. Yet, despite acknowledging such partiality, a doctoral thesis is an entirely modern endeavour, in which rationality, order and direction are imposed on the complex detail of the research.

Despite weaknesses and limitations to their work, both Weber and Foucault continue to provide a wealth of thought-provoking theories and controversies about power and how it might be conceived. The present work does not pretend to replace the ideas of either theorist, yet it hopes to have extended the debate about the theory and practice of power

in some measure. In terms of the police organization, the research has attempted to render visible many of the power practices that are taken for granted in the organization on a daily basis. It has brought to the police literature a critical perspective on organizations that has been largely lacking to date, and has provided a theoretically grounded analysis of practices often described as police culture, but seldom interrogated for the power-practices that serve to create and recreate everyday practices.

The research has placed questions of power inequalities at the centre of much of the analysis, and has incorporated subjectivity and identity as integral features of power practices in organizations, acknowledging the many contradictory ways in which the demands of the workplace inform and fuel shifting aspects of identity. The analysis has consequently acknowledged the ways in which subjectivity is an influential aspect of power practices in the work place. It has shown some of the ways in which assessment practices in the police organization exacerbate and shape concerns with subjectivity, as often expressed in attempts to protect aspects of identity, or in the privileging of some aspects of identity over others in this very public, and male dominated, workplace.

At its core, this concluding chapter will underscore a central contention of the present work: that many theories of power, including those associated with Weber and Foucault, do not adequately incorporate the influence and role of identity and subjectivity in the shaping of power practices. Building on the preceding theoretical and empirical analyses, this chapter will emphasize the many ways in which subjectivity, as often expressed in identity concerns, is so much a part of the practices of power, as exemplified in the police organization. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the importance of incorporating *arange* of practices when considering how power might best be conceived in theory, and practice.

In the following seven sections, this chapter will draw together, and highlight the contributions of this thesis to these ongoing and much-contested debates about power. The chapter first underlines the ways in which epistemological and ontological assumptions impact on the way power is conceptualized and researched. The discussion then goes on in the second section, impersonal authority and subjectivity, to articulate an important theme of the thesis, namely, that the over-determined (Weberian) assumptions about rationality and the pursuit of impersonal authority that continue to inform the organization of the police fail to take subjectivity and resistance into account. In the next section, power/knowledge explored, the chapter will emphasize the ways in which the present research has engaged with, and extended Foucault's ideas on power/knowledge. Discussion in this section also illustrates some of the ways in which the present thesis contributes to ongoing theoretical debates about the nature of resistance. Having considered some of the theoretical emphases and contributions of the thesis, the chapter will then highlight in the next section some of the ways in which a critical perspective on power practices contributes to research and literature on the police, before outlining some of the strengths of the empirical contribution of the research. The chapter will then explore some of the problematic issues that arise out of the research. In conclusion, the chapter will suggest ways in which the present research might further be developed. However, this concluding chapter will first turn to a discussion of the importance of epistemology and ontology in the study of power.

### **Epistemological and ontological emphasis explored**

This thesis has argued that a detailed exploration of epistemological and ontological assumptions is a crucial part of an exploration of the foundational claims that inform different theories *and* practices of power. To that end, the detailed discussion of the development of Enlightenment thought and the associated rise of rationality in earlier

chapters highlighted the assumptions that informed Max Weber's perspective on power. It also placed his work on bureaucracy in the context of the broader pursuit of rationality often associated with the so-called project of modernity. In highlighting the Enlightenment pursuit of rationality, and Weber's contribution in this regard, the discussion also served to show that the bureaucratic form selected for the newly-formed police organization in early nineteenth century England was a product of prevailing Enlightenment trends. The police organization was established on the presumption that the imposition of hierarchical structures, legislated behaviours, and apparent uniformity and impersonal authority would lead to legitimacy for, and acceptance of, the English police by the public.

However, the analysis also developed a close scrutiny of the apparent rise of post-modern thought, and explored the epistemological challenge this posed for assumptions about the pre-eminence of the rational subject. One contribution of the post-modern debate has been to highlight some of the important limitations of positivist assumptions and methodology. The inclusion of detailed analysis of these limitations in the theoretical discussions paved the way for an analysis of power that could go beyond that which is easily measurable and calculable. In addition, the arguably post-modern insistence on unpacking that which is taken for granted in everyday practices has proven to be crucial in the shaping of a study that has sought to incorporate a *range* of practices in the analysis of power. The thesis has drawn on the work of Foucault in this regard, and the focus on *practices* of power is presented as a strength of the present work.

Furthermore, the detailed discussion of post-modern and post-structural critiques of the rational sovereign subject assumed to be at the heart of Enlightenment thought, is a crucial step in the exploration of what power is about, and how it might be researched. The emphasis in this research on the de-centred subject, as opposed to a rational

sovereign subject, allows for an exploration of power in which structure and action operate in a dialectical way. This thesis has sought to avoid placing an over-determining emphasis on structural features of organization on individuals, while at the same time seeking to explore the extent and nature of individuals' capacities to shape those structures. This thesis has explored some of the ways in which (multiple) structures interact with and shape the actions of individuals, yet in which the individual agent has some (but not sovereign) role in shaping those structures. Post-structural and associated post-modern insistence on de-centering the subject allows for a more detailed and inclusive analysis of the range of practices that combine in the structure/action nexus. It is for these reasons that the present work has placed such emphasis on the importance of epistemology and ontology.

Having set out in this section the central importance of epistemology and ontology to this, and indeed any, study of power, the following section will draw together two important themes of the theoretical and empirical analyses of this thesis: impersonal authority and subjectivity.

### **Impersonal authority and subjectivity**

Earlier analyses have highlighted the influence of Weberian assumptions about rationality and bureaucracy at the time of the formation of the police organization. Reliance on the command structure, and on the mechanisms associated with bureaucratic structure have been shown in the discussion to be linked directly with the need to create legitimacy for the police, in the public eye, in the nineteenth century.

A central feature of the pursuit of legitimate authority through bureaucracy is the notion of impersonal authority, exemplified in the uniformed beat officer. A host of rules and regulations and procedures detail the standardized ways in which *all and any* officers



should respond to a given situation. A further set of rules and regulations were devised to govern the demeanour and dress of those same officers, in further pursuit of impersonal authority. The public were to be presented with a de-personalized officer in uniform, and an apparently impartial set of responses and behaviours from any officer, in any circumstance.

Weberian assumptions about the rational pursuit of control through bureaucracy, are still apparent. Legitimacy for the police organization, and discipline of officers' behaviour, have long been pursued through the creation of bureaucratic rules and regulations. Militaristic overtones continue to reinforce the bureaucratic system of control, and a disciplinary regime that is overt and is minutely prescriptive of requisite behaviours continues to operate in tandem with the application of newly managerial control techniques in the police. Quasi-militaristic bureaucracy in the police, with a range of associated rules and regulations, reflects a conceptualization of discipline that is linked to an episodic view of power as something which can be exercised over others. The data have shown this typically Weberian approach to discipline is still prevalent in the police organization, where senior officers are still inclined and called upon to exercise a combination of authority and disciplinary actions over more junior officers, who have little choice but to obey direct orders, at least while in the presence of supervising officers.

The on-going attempts to manage officers' capacity for discretion, and to exert directive control over their social relations and informal police culture, re-emphasize the limitations of Weber's 'iron cage of bureaucracy', limitations which have been articulated in earlier chapters. Despite those acknowledged limitations, the likes of Chan (1997), and Walker (1991) advocate increased control through yet more structural (determining) control and specification. The present work is critical of the overly-

determined nature of their analyses. This thesis has sought to show the limitations of pursuing control by increasing structural determination, and to show the many ways in which the pursuit of impersonal authority, and associated assumptions about neutrality, is constrained and limited by the capacities individual officers have as active agents to interact with, and respond to, demands for organization. The thesis has argued that these interactions and responses are often fueled by individual concerns with subjectivity, and related aspects of identity in the workplace

In addition to reinforcing existing critiques of Weber with regard to bureaucracy, the empirical analysis of the present work extends the critique of the 'iron cage' thesis by introducing subjectivity to the analysis. Detailed considerations of some of the many ways in which officers' interact with, and respond to, the many organizational attempts to determine their output and behaviour, show the extent to which the pursuit of legitimacy through impersonal authority and bureaucracy fails to take on board the agentic processes and capacities of officers. This thesis argues that the assumptions of rationality and bureaucracy fail in their pursuit of impersonal authority because the importance of subjectivity and agency is neglected, and rendered invisible. The analysis in this thesis has shown the many and varied ways in which subjectivities interact with the determining efforts of structures, be these of formal hierarchy, management control practices, or gender.

In exploring the many ways in which structures, meanings and responses are negotiated in the police organization, this thesis has shown that a relational conceptualization of power in which these many strands combine, and in which subjectivity is an important feature, is able to accommodate more of the complexity of power practices. Engaging with the sometimes contradictory and unexpected interactions of power-related practices is certainly more revealing of the dynamics at work in the police organization than is an

episodic (Weberian) view, in which power is conceived of as the capacity to impose the will of one onto another.

The analytical and practical importance of subjectivity to the study of power will be explored further in the next section in light of the engagement in this thesis with Foucauldian perspectives power.

### **Power/knowledge explored**

This thesis has sought to push the analysis of power into new areas in some measure. To that end, it has focused on two particularly valuable aspects of Foucault's contributions to discussions of power. The first is that power is located in practices. The second is that power might be considered as both constraining and productive. Conceiving of power in a relational way encourages analysis of practices of power, rather than a seeking of discrete events in which power is exercised over an object, situation, or person. The relational conceptualization of power that Foucault proffers suggests that everyday, often taken-for-granted practices be scrutinized for power-related practices.

Furthermore, this thesis has drawn on Foucault's insistence that domination based on surveillance leads to *self-disciplining* and *self-domination*. Foucault argued that the domination inherent in surveillance techniques is a consequence of the *potential* for knowledge about the individual's actions and thoughts to be used in a punitive or disciplinary way. That such knowledge *might* be used against the individual leads to them disciplining their own actions, even when there is direct supervision of those actions. Discipline is therefore said to be self-imposed, and discretionary choices are self-limited.

Some of the critiques of Foucault outlined in earlier theoretical discussions question the broad applicability of the Benthamite panopticon and other surveillance mechanisms to

other organizational settings, in particular, to settings that are not considered to be 'total organizations'. Although the police might well be quasi-militaristic and bureaucratic, the organization is a long way from being a total institution, in the way that an asylum or a prison might be considered to control the personal liberty and movement of patients and inmates (e.g. Goffman, 1961) as illustrated, for example, in earlier discussions of the discretion officers exercise in the enforcement of the law.

The present research contributes both theoretically and empirically to the critical discussion of Foucault's work. The detailed data analyses presented in the foregoing chapters suggest that the power/knowledge concept itself is useful in exploring practices of power, but that it is necessary to engage critically with the concept. The many expressions of knowledge-related practices described in the empirical chapters suggests a more complex and contradictory picture than that implied by the disciplinary 'gaze' of the panopticon. The disciplinarity inherent in many of the knowledge-related practices in the organization are at times highly contradictory. For example, the data have shown that visibility that is achieved through gender and race can be highly problematic, and can be used in a disciplinary manner against the individual officer. Yet, at the same time, visibility is essential as a way of counter-acting the anonymity of being one police officer amongst hundreds of others, many of whom are rendered invisible by the very uniformity that arises out of impersonal authority and bureaucratic demands for regimentation and predictability. It is essential to overcome that anonymity in order to progress in the organization.

Yet, for women in the organization, attracting attention and becoming visible raises issues that most male officers do not have to engage with in the same way. In this way, this research shows some of the complexity of power/knowledge, and suggests that there are prevailing gendered power inequalities that must be recognized.

While Foucault's power/knowledge interaction proves useful in exploring the many ways in which knowledge-related practices might be disciplining, and even counter-active, he pays little attention to the material and symbolic importance of identity in his work, and does not consider the importance of subjectivity. This research has shown the many and varied ways in which identity concerns are exacerbated by management demands for assessment and accountability. The managerial drive for visibility and accountability detailed in the empirical chapters is by no means successful in imposing its 'gaze' on officers in any totalizing way. The data illustrated many ways in which officers negotiate different aspects of their identity, sometimes defensively. The important point here is that individual officers are not passive in response to the disciplinary intent of assessment practices. Their responses might not be readily recognized as overt resistance, yet they are actively interacting with, and responding to, management practices that might seek to direct aspects of their identity.

That management are continually devising new assessment techniques and criteria shows the extent to which these techniques remain limited, in part because they cannot render the individual agent entirely calculable or self-disciplining. Foucault neglects the impact of individual concerns with material and symbolic security, and it is these concerns that inform many of the responses of officers to both overt (bureaucratic rationality) and covert (assessment techniques) disciplinary intent of management practices.

This thesis therefore argues that power/knowledge is useful in considering how power operates in practice, but that knowledge-related practices require further deconstruction. For example, the research has shown the many ways in which practices associated with assessment and accountability are shaped to some extent by the meanings associated with police work: evidence, proof, and processes of conviction. The analysis shows some of the ways in which the management drive to assess and measure performance objectives,

and also the personality, expression, and attitudes of officers invokes a range of knowledge-related practices. In turn, these assessment demands exacerbate and fuel identity concerns amongst officers.

Foucault has been criticized for under-theorizing resistance in his discussions of power, as explored in earlier chapters. This thesis seeks to contribute to these discussions about the nature of resistance. The data have shown some of the many ways that identity negotiation and concerns with subjectivity have some impact on the forms that resistance might take. Furthermore, this thesis contributes to on-going debates about resistance by suggesting that it is useful to expand our understanding of resistance to incorporate 'interactions' and 'responses' as part of the range of practices that might be associated with resistance. Officers' responses to management practices, or different hierarchical practices, might not always be recognized as active acts of resistance. This thesis argues that it is problematic to over-simplify resistance, that resistance is about more than overt and obvious forms, and that resistance does not only exist in easily recognizable episodic events. The data suggest that a move away from conceiving resistance in a (Weberian) zero-sum way makes it possible to engage with more of the complexity that resides in the structure/action relationship.

A broader and critical conception of resistance *also*, however, demands going beyond the Foucauldian catch-all view in which resistance is somehow everywhere, in non-specifiable non-identifiable forms. This thesis argues that by conceiving of resistance more broadly, in the form of interactions and responses, an analysis of power practices is able to engage more critically and specifically with the important issue of resistance in the workplace, of which more will be said in the following sections. For the moment, it is sufficient to make the point that, in highlighting the importance of officers' responses to and interactions with management practices, identity concerns, and gendered hierarchies,

the present research seeks to distance itself from accusations of political relativity. The present argument insists on making identity, subjectivity and persistent inequalities central to the analysis.

In concluding this section, it is worth reiterating that this thesis shows that an approach to power practices that incorporates subjectivity in its analysis offers a perspective in which inequalities and power asymmetries, some apparently persistent over time, can be problematized and explored. In addition, the analysis shows some of the many ways in which the managerial pursuit of assessment serves to exacerbate insecurity of identity, and often encourages defensive orientations on the part of many officers.

Having established in this, and the preceding section that the notions of subjectivity contribute in a number of important ways to the study of power, the next section will summarize the contributions of the present research with regard to the police organization itself.

### **Critical perspective on the police organization**

The research contributes to the academic literature on the police in a number of ways. Firstly, it directly addresses Brown's (1998) call for deconstruction of police culture. At the same time the research contributes a theoretically informed analysis of the often-described intransigent male-dominated police culture, and so expands the terms of reference and analysis for future discussion and research into the varied cultural practices of the police. By bringing a critical approach to organizational studies to bear on the analysis, the present research contributes by problematizing descriptions of the intransigence of police culture, and introduces into the analysis consideration of resistance, subjectivity and identity. Considerations of the importance of these agentic processes questions Walker's (1991) insistence that precise management of structures

will lead to the eradication of cultural practices deemed undesirable in the police. Furthermore, in its insistence on problematizing the assumptions of management solutions adopted in the police organization, the present research contributes a perspective missing from the related academic research on the police.

One of the contributions of the present work is to consider closely the varied and subtle ways in which officers might interact with and respond to the competing modes of rationality to which they are exposed in the current climate: traditional militaristic bureaucratic authority on the one hand, and managerial rationality on the other. It illustrates the sometimes contradictory demands these approaches place on officers, and explores these through a critical analysis of the everyday, taken for granted practices that imbue both forms of rationality.

The analysis has shown that present concerns with controlling police behaviour and attitudes through practices associated with management is in part a reflection of long-standing demands for the creation of police legitimacy in the eyes of the public they serve, and with balancing conflicting expectations and views on what the legitimate role of the police should be in historical and contemporary British society. Recent resort to overt management is also a direct response to demands for financial and political accountability. Both of these drives for accountability, albeit of different sorts, appear to lead to an interpretation of management as measurement, which in turn feeds into, and is fed by, the evidential nature of police work.

The research has shown that officers' concerns and disquiet about the pursuit of measurement and performance indicators is shaped in part by a climate of mistrust and suspicion that is informed by the evidential nature of some police work. Mistrust amongst officers of the managerial drive for assessment and accountability is also in part a



consequence of the still-prevalent episodic exercise of traditional fear-based and punishment-based discipline, discipline of a militaristic kind. There are in effect two, often contradictory, modes of discipline at work in the police at present, with sometimes contradictory outcomes. If the two modes of discipline are similar in any way, it is in their pursuit of greater rationality and calculability in the organization.

The critical analysis of the practices that inform so-called new managerialism in the police questions the prescriptive statements about the pursuit of efficiency, or the management of culture. The present analysis of management-related practices shows the myriad of power practices that interact, and counteract in the organization. The analysis has shown ways in which one reinforces another, or indeed counteracts another, by deconstructing the everyday and taken for granted practices of management. The analysis shows that assumptions about the neutrality of management techniques and tools are hollow, and that the context into which they are introduced is highly influential in shaping the way each will be implemented and responded to, and sometimes resisted.

The suspicion which is part of police work influences the way management is pursued in the force, and the way in which officers' respond to overt attempts to manage the force. It also shows how definitions of police work and statuses between divisions are reinforced by management practices, such as 'demotion' from CID to the uniformed beat. It also displays how officers' interactions with and responses to those statuses, such as gender asymmetries, may inadvertently reinforce the status inequalities that prevail in the police over time. The research contributes by showing that it is a complex and often interrelated *range* of power practices that serve to reinforce and maintain power inequalities. The data on the contradictory ways in which visibility and reputation practices operate in the organization are useful in this regard. Analysis of the police organization has provided an

opportunity to show some of the complex interconnections between notions of control, authority, rationality, and power.

The pursuit of control over officers' attitudes and behaviours through the techniques and assumptions of management reflects in part the limitations of bureaucratic control mechanisms and assumptions in the police. The very need to (at least appear) to seek the cooperation of officers through self-development and developmental appraisals, for example, in addition to the ongoing 'problem' of officers' discretion and the unsupervised nature of much of their work, reflects the limitations of imposing control through detailed regulation and specification of limits, behaviours, and responses. The present insistence on a critical consideration of the many contradictory and often unacknowledged practices that surround the impositions of management practices once again shows that Walker's (199:609) fervent contention that 'structural reform ... is capable of treating and ultimately eradicating the causes of ... [cultural] resistance' is not only highly problematic, but is also wholly oversimplified.

Building on the discussion in this section of the contributions of the present research with regard to the police organization, the next section will examine some of the problematic issues that emerge from the analysis in this thesis.

### **Problematic issues**

This chapter has already emphasized the significance of the often vexatious question of resistance in the study of power. This section will first deal in further detail with ongoing problem of resistance in organizations, and in the field of organization studies, before considering other problematic issues that arise out of the present analysis.

Recent objections to the application of post-structural and post-modern ideas in studies of organizations are often based the criticism that these approaches overstate ‘the extent and effectiveness of new management practices, while marginalising the potential for resistance’ (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995:615). This particular Marxist-inspired approach criticizes ‘Foucauldian perspectives’ for ascribing management with capacities for active agency, while denying ‘labour’ the capacity for action (and resistance).

It is the contention of this thesis that the criticisms made by Thomson & Ackroyd (taken here as exemplars of the debate in organization studies outlined in Chapter 3) can be countered in a number of important ways. The present research *grapples directly* with the theoretical and practical problems of resistance in the workplace, *while* making use of deconstructive methods that might be associated with post-structuralist research, and with aspects of post-modern epistemology. Furthermore, the analysis has sought to extend theoretical debates about resistance by expanding the range of practices that might be considered to be expressions of resistance in the workplace. The analysis has also sought to extend the debate with regard to applications of Foucault’s ideas on power/knowledge and surveillance in organizations, and to that end has explored a wider range of practices that might be associated with surveillance, and the related power/knowledge concept. This thesis, and the deconstructive methods employed in the analysis, have explicitly sought to critique the notion that management are privileged agentic actors in organizations, or that management can *achieve* control over *labour*. Accordingly, this thesis quite explicitly recognizes and incorporates the agentic capacities of police ‘labourers’.

Furthermore, this thesis argues that it is overly and unnecessarily reductive to privilege ‘labour’ resistance practices over other forms in which resistance might be expressed. The thesis has argued that an analysis of power, and of the related resistance practices, is

most elucidating of workplace practices when it considers the *range* of ways in which officers interact with, and respond to, management practices. Furthermore, the thesis argues that incorporation of notions of subjectivity in analyses of power practices is a means through which the resistance capacities of individuals can be better recognized and the consequences of different forms of resistance further explored.

The present work differs from the contention of Thompson & Ackroyd (1995) that 'labour' and gender issues are necessarily mutually exclusive in the analysis of workplace practices of resistance. The present work has argued that power, and associated resistance practices, are usefully considered in an integrative way, that gender and 'labour' interact in the complexity of power relations in organizations. A study of power that draws on the empirical example of the police, in which gender was ignored, would be highly problematic. The present analysis has shown that gender-related power asymmetries inform many aspects of police work, as well as relations between officers.

Furthermore, incorporation of gender as an important analytical theme in this study is a recognition that some power asymmetries, such as those associated with gender, do continue over time. Accordingly the present work, while adopting what might be considered deconstructive methods, has sought explicitly to distance itself from the problematic issue of political relativism that has been associated with Foucault's work, and with post-modernism in general.

Other problematic issues arise out of this research. The issue of workplace resistance amongst police officers is important precisely because police officers have legalized coercive powers over the public, as outlined in the introduction. The case of police officers suggests that discussions of resistance must take into account more than Marxist notions of freeing the oppressed. Because of their legal powers, the police are not a class

of powerless and economically disenfranchised workers who are potentially exploited by the demands and inequities of capitalism. Accordingly, in the case of the police, resistance at work does not only raise questions about the dignity and sovereignty of the worker. Nor does resistance in the police merely raise questions about productivity, if the 'problem' is considered from a managerialist perspective. Problematizing resistance is particularly important because of the need to ensure that police do not abuse their legal authority. The problem of resistance is not unique to the police in this regard, but applies, for example, to medical staff and social workers.

Accordingly, the importance of exposing some of the assumptions about management, and the effect of demands that intensify rationality and attempts to render calculable the individual, is to show that police officers cannot be rendered passive objects, despite the pursuit of impersonal authority. It is crucial that taken-for-granted practices, such as those associated with management, are scrutinized for the ways in which they might *exacerbate* some of the very resistance they are designed to change.

Accordingly, the police organization is an extremely useful example when assessing what the boundaries and assumptions are of the emancipatory project. In addition, the experiences of the women officers presented in this research shows how problematic it is to conceive of emancipation or resistance in a one-dimensional way. For example, as police officers, policewomen have legal powers over the public they serve, yet, as the data have shown, the position of women within the police organization remains problematic, and women officers are having to manage gendered power hierarchies in ways that their male colleagues are not. In other words, while police officers are powerful, police women are less powerful within the organization. The question then arises: from whom should police women be emancipated?

The emancipatory project and the problematic nature of resistance are also linked into the often-repeated concern in this research to protect individual officers' anonymity. Emancipation raises questions as to how aspects of the present work might be regarded as useful knowledge to be used by others. For example, aspects of the research might be used in arguments against the police, or might be adapted by the police in order to fend off demands for increased management. There is a risk that the present work might be colonized in support of the everyday victim-discourse that officers use about themselves and their organization. This thesis is clear in its insistence that it is essential to critique such discourses from a power perspective in order to avoid simplistic interpretations. The police are not victims, and they have significant legal powers to use at their discretion. At the same time, it is necessary to consider critically the ways in which the drive for assessment might have counterproductive and 'unforeseen consequences' (Giddens, 1984:293), as might the competing and often contradictory multiple hierarchies at work in the organization.

Finally, it is worth raising the question as to whether some of the apparent resistance to equality of opportunity, reflected in much of the police literature, is in part a case of 'shooting the messenger'. The rise of managerialism in the police is a consequence of the pursuit of accountability, as evidenced in the strong association between management and measurement in the organization. Consequently, the pursuit of management in the police reflects an increase in demands for (Weberian) rationality. Yet, many of the tools used to impose a newly managerial climate are dressed up and presented in the guise of equal opportunities policies and developmental opportunities for staff. Good intentions aside, it might be the case that some of the resistance to equal opportunities is at least in part a reflection of resistance to increased rationality and demands for visible calculability.

Having considered in this section some of the problematic issues that arise in this study of power, the discussion that follows will outline some of the specific ways in which the empirical emphasis adopted in this research strengthens the analysis of power.

### **Empirical approach**

The case study methodology adopted in the present research has facilitated the analytical focus upon the complex interrelationships that inform the construction of power in the police. It has proven to be a useful methodology for examining the interplay and dynamics of power and subjectivity, and the methodology has allowed for an exploration of power practices that are understood as both constraining and productive.

The fieldwork process itself highlighted a number of themes that reappeared in later data analyses: negotiation of gendered and command hierarchies; visibility; knowledge; the use of distance as a response to various hierarchical demands; the strategic and often defensive use of bureaucratic rules; and the interplay between meanings ascribed in different settings (evidence gathering in police work and in research work, for example).

Furthermore, it is on the basis of the empirical data that the analysis is able to argue that an exploration of knowledge practices in the police organization reveals a range of practices perhaps more complex and subtle than panoptic surveillance. The research questions, illustrated in Appendix F, asked about a range of practices that might be associated with power. None of them asked specifically about the range of knowledge-related themes, such as visibility, evidence, reputation, and definition that were so much a part of officers' responses to a range of practice-related questions. It is on the basis of the empirical data that this thesis can suggest with some confidence that a close and critical look at power/knowledge practices might go some way towards redressing Foucault's general failure to problematize inequality. Once again, the choice of the police

organization as an exemplar of power practices has proven to be an extremely useful vehicle for exploring some of the constraints and possibilities of theoretical conceptualizations of power.

In addition to providing rich material of relevance to exploring theoretical conceptualizations of power, the empirical nature of part of the present research contributes to the existing literature on the police in a number of ways. One contribution of the empirical aspect of the research has been to answer Norris's (1993) criticism that much of police research fails to describe how the research was conducted and ethical dilemmas were resolved. The detailed case studies relating to the research methodology address this criticism directly.

Furthermore, the historical overview of the development of the police organization shows the extent to which controlling, delimiting and influencing the behaviour and attitudes of police officers' and their actions is an ongoing, 'age-old' concern. The historical overview of the use of bureaucratic assumptions to impose control on officers' behaviours at work places more recent applications of the assumptions of management in the police in context. The tools and techniques associated with management of the police reflect historical concerns with using organizational structures and practices to delimit officers' behaviours and orientations to their job, and in addition reflects a response to increased demands for financial and political accountability. The historical overview also shows some of the complexity that surrounds managing behaviour in the police organization.

A further significant empirical contribution of the present research with regard to the police literature is the insistence on incorporating gender in the analysis of power, rather than presenting gender-concerns as a bolted-on extracurricular concern. Furthermore, this



thesis has presented a detailed and critical analysis of the many ways in which women officers interact with, and respond to, management practices, the formal hierarchy of the organization, and the complex demands of the organizational culture. This detailed analysis of police women's responses to 'canteen culture' locates women as participative agents in negotiating the complex and varied demands of the police culture, and aspects of its white, male values.

In choosing to give police women a much-neglected and detailed voice, however, the thesis does not seek to present the 'canteen culture' as monolithic, or to create an artificial dichotomy in which all policewomen are pitted against all policemen. What it does is to show some of the complex and often contradictory ways in which gendered hierarchies interact with other prevailing hierarchies, such as definition of different types of police work, formal rank hierarchy, and race, serve to reinforce and constrain each other. Having set out in this section some of the specifically empirical contributions of the present research, the next section will outline future directions in which this research might be developed.

### **Future research**

One way in which the present research might be further developed would be to explore further the limits of the emancipatory project, both theoretically and empirically. It might be useful to design a research project that would specifically address the issues raised in this thesis about the limitations, ambitions, and purpose of the emancipatory project with regard to: 1) specific workplace practices; and 2) as an important and contentious strand in the broadly-related fields of organizational theory, social theory, and industrial relations. Such a study might usefully compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses

of Marxist, feminist, and critical organizational perspectives with regard to the emancipatory project.

It might also be fruitful to explore the epistemological limitations and possibilities of workplace resistance as articulated in the present research findings in light of the critical realist perspective often associated with Bhaskar (1978). Critical realists, as briefly touched upon in earlier chapters, adopt an ontological position in which the sentient subject has a fixity denied by much of the work associated with post-structuralism, and with deconstructive method. Such research might compare and contrast the work of Foucault as presented in the present research, with that of Bhaskar and Giddens, in order to further explore the limitations and potential of workplace resistance in theory, and equally, in organizational practices.

Within the context of the police organization, future research could pursue questions about the consequences of responses directly with those women officers who participated in the present study, and with a larger group of women officers. It might be useful to explore their views on the responses outlined in the present research in a group setting as well as in personal interviews, to see if different data arise. Future research might also address directly with senior police officers what their conceptualization of management is, and how this interacts with traditional military bureaucracy. It would be important that such research was designed to explore practices rather than idealized descriptions of management or traditional hierarchy, and might expand the present discussion and analysis of different modes of achieving discipline in the force. Allied to this exploration, it might be useful to consider some of the power-related practices that reside in, and that inform recent moves to employ so-called civilians in positions formerly occupied by police officers. The use of the militaristic label is in itself an early indication of underlying hierarchical assumptions worthy of closer scrutiny.

The research might also be developed by conducting fieldwork in a *large* metropolitan force, where the absolute numbers of officers on each shift would be greater. This would provide more opportunities for non-participative observation of officers' interactions with each other than was possible in the present research. Observation of officers' talking and interacting amongst themselves might offer insights into some of the taken for granted, everyday practices that interviews are unable to access. For example, the specific ways in which officers' use humour in response to the demands of their job, the organization, and their colleagues might be highly revealing of power practices and of associated resistance practices. Research in a larger force might also create greater opportunities for observing the discourse and practices of groups of officers in interaction with the public while on duty.

Drawing on the approach adopted in the present research, a theoretically grounded future study of power-related aspects of sexual harassment in the police could address ways in which officers respond to sexual harassment, and the consequences of the range of responses. Allied to this, it might be useful to follow up on an observation of the present research, that fear is one of the dominant emotions in the police organization. The contradictions and consequences of the victim-discourse might usefully be explored further in this regard. In addition, future research might focus on the many practices of assessment that characterize much of management practice, and which the present research has shown to be of central significance in power-related practices of the police. Observation of a range of appraisal interviews, and of promotion interviews might be two useful methods through which to pursue such research, and might be revealing of gender-specific dynamics at work in these interviews. Furthermore, if the present research were replicated in another force, this would provide a way of assessing which of the power-related practices are force-specific, and which are more generally applicable to the police. Similarly, researching power practices associated with management, hierarchies and

gender relations in other organizational settings might provide a further useful counterpoint for evaluating the empirical findings and theoretical developments outlined earlier in this thesis. It might, for example, be informative to conduct research on power-related practices in a loosely managed, flat organizational setting, such as a small software development company, where employees have a great deal of apparent autonomy at work in terms of creativity and hours of work, and where assessment, so central in police power-practices, is often not an apparent feature of the workplace.

### **In conclusion**

This thesis has sought to explore the terms and constraints of a number of competing perspectives on power, and in so doing, to extend theoretical debates about power in some measure. The empirical analysis of power in the police organization has been a vehicle to that end, and has provided many rich examples that have assisted in the examination of the boundaries of different theoretical approaches to power.

In addition, it is hoped that the empirical analysis of power practices in the police will prove a useful contribution to our understanding of the police, the largest, and arguably most influential arm of the criminal justice system in this country. At the time of writing this thesis, the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 was passed in parliament. Under Section 6 of the Act, local authorities and police constabularies will be required to produce strategies for the reduction of crime, and will be required to formulate detailed audits of crime-reduction in their regions of responsibility. The Home Office has made available no less than 250 million pounds to support crime reduction audits and projects. What the *organizational* consequences of this extensive assessment and measurement drive will be for the police remain to be seen. Management of the police looks set to become even more strongly equated with measurement in the immediate future.

## **Appendix A: quality of service measurements**

Source: *Achievement Report Statistical Appendices, Financial Year 1995-1996* (\*Force name with-held to ensure anonymity)

# COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED

## LETTERS OF THANKS . COMMENDATIONS etc.

1 Sensitive, courteous etc. Service	4	3	11	22	7	1	0	48
2 Act without fear or favour	0	1	0	11	1	0	0	13
3 Professional, calm & restrained	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3
4 As visible as possible - reduce crime	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
5 Victim of crime	4	2	1	14	2	0	1	24
6 Victim of accident	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
7 Answer 999 calls	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
8 Answer other calls at Switchboard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Attend incidents	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
10 All other calls for assistance	4	2	0	7	0	0	0	13
11 Correspondence standard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 Any other Quality of Service issue	5	2	6	6	3	3	0	25
TOTAL	17	11	18	69	13	4	2	134

## **Appendix B: Home Office performance indicators**

# HOME OFFICE KEY OBJECTIVES AND ASSOCIATED PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Police and Magistrates Courts Act 1994 empowers the Home Secretary to set, by Order, key objectives for policing in England and Wales. Chief Constables have to have regard to these objectives in carrying out their duties.

KEY OBJECTIVES	
01	To maintain and if possible increase the number of detections for violent crimes.
02	To increase the number of detections for burglaries of people's homes.
03	To target and prevent crimes which are a particular local problem, including drug-related * criminality, in partnership with the public and local agencies. \$
04	To provide high visibility policing so as to reassure the public.
05	To respond promptly to emergency calls from the public.

\* Drug related criminality did not feature in the 1994/95 Objectives.

\$ Development of an appropriate high level indicator has not yet been achieved. An interim indicator in respect of drugs is displayed for 1995/96; indicators & data concerning local problems may be found in the detailed statistical analysis following.

REF No.	DESCRIPTION	YEAR 1994/95	YEAR 1995/96
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS			
01	The number of Violent Crime Detections/100 officers	146.38	132.79
02	The number of Burglary Dwelling Detections/100 officers	90.54	110.11
03	The number of offences prosecuted/cautioned under the Misuse of Drugs Act, 1971 per 1,000 population	N/A	2.10
04	% satisfied with perceived levels of foot/car patrols	38.34	46.49
05 (i)	% 999 calls answered within target	92.24	89.65
05 (ii)	% Immediate incidents responded to within target time	80.93	82.50



## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

REF No.	BODY	DESCRIPTION	YEAR 1994/95	YEAR 1995/96
<b>CALL MANAGEMENT</b>				
	HMIC	Police strength (Audit Commission definition)	994.00	979.00
	HMIC	Total number of incidents	158788.00	125766.00
1	HMIC	Incidents per 100 police officers	15974.65	12846.37
2a	AC	Total number of 999 calls received	48870.00	54921.00
2b	AC	Local target time for answering 999 calls (secs) - (95% within)	15.00	15.00
	AC	Number of 999 calls answered within target time	45078.00	49234.00
2c	AC	% calls answered within target	92.24	89.65
3a	AC	Local definition of incidents requiring immediate response	see Appendix 'C'	see Appendix 'C'
3b	AC	Number of incidents requiring an immediate response - URBAN	8612.00	8284.00
		Number of incidents requiring an immediate response - RURAL	7284.00	6830.00
		Number of incidents requiring an immediate response - TOTAL	15896.00	15114.00
3c	AC	Local target time for responding to such incidents (mins) - URBAN	10.00	10.00
		Local target time for responding to such incidents (mins) - RURAL	20.00	20.00
	AC	Number of incidents responded to within target time - URBAN	6873.00	6840.00
		Number of incidents responded to within target time - RURAL	5991.00	5629.00
		Number of incidents responded to within target time - TOTAL	12864.00	12469.00
3d	AC	% incidents responded to within the target time - URBAN	79.81	82.57
		% incidents responded to within the target time - RURAL	82.25	82.42
		% incidents responded to within the target time - TOTAL	80.93	82.50
	ACPO	Response to 999 calls survey, effective sample size	201.00	193.00
	ACPO	Response to 999 calls survey, number satisfied	171.00	171.00
4	ACPO	% satisfied with response to 999 calls	85.07	88.60
	ACPO	Station enquiry survey, effective sample size	640.00	425.00
	ACPO	Station enquiry survey, number satisfied	613.00	411.00
5	ACPO	% satisfied with station enquiries service	95.78	96.71
<b>CRIME MANAGEMENT</b>				
	HMIC	White population	479328.00	479328.00
6a	HMIC	Number of PACE stop/searches of white persons	4836.00	6696.00
	HMIC	PACE stop/searches per 1000 white population	10.09	13.97
	HMIC	Ethnic minority population	16970.00	16970.00
6b	HMIC	Number of PACE stop/searches of ethnic minority persons	260.00	509.00
	HMIC	PACE stop/searches per 1000 ethnic minority population	15.32	29.99
7a	HMIC	Total number of files sent to CPS	5732.00	5385.00
	HMIC	Number of files sub-standard at 1st submission	1490.00	1098.00
	HMIC	% of files sent to CPS failed at 1st submission	25.99	20.39
	HMIC	Number of files proceeded with by CPS	5443	5341
7b	HMIC	% of files proceeded with by CPS	94.96	99.18
	HMIC	Number of files sent to CPS complying with time limits	4299	4901
7c	HMIC	% of files sent to CPS complying with time limits	75.00	91.01

KEY :- AC = Audit Commission  
ACPO = Association of Chief Police Officers  
CPS = Crown Prosecution Service  
HMIC = Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary  
PACE = Police and Criminal Evidence Act

REF No.	BODY	DESCRIPTION	YEAR 1994/95	YEAR 1995/96
<b>CRIME MANAGEMENT</b>				
8a	HMIC	Number of persons arrested/reported for notifiable offences	9466.00	9647.00
	HMIC	Number of persons arrested/reported per 100 police officers	952.31	985.39
	HMIC	Number of persons arrested/reported for notifiable offences prosecuted	4146.00	4062.00
8b	HMIC	% of persons arrested/reported who were prosecuted	43.80	42.11
	HMIC	Number of persons arrested/reported for notifiable offences cautioned	1909.00	1939.00
8c	HMIC	% of persons arrested/reported who were cautioned	20.17	20.10
	HMIC	Number of persons arrested/reported for notifiable offences dealt with by other means	893.00	1131.00
8d	HMIC	% of persons arrested/reported who were dealt with by other means	9.43	11.72
	HMIC	Number of persons arrested/reported for notifiable offences subject to no further action	2518.00	2515.00
8e	HMIC	% of persons arrested/reported subject to no further action	26.60	26.07
	HMIC	Total number of reported racial incidents	114.00	99.00
	HMIC	Number of reported racial incidents subject to further investigation	103.00	88.00
9	HMIC	% reported racial incidents subject to further investigation	90.35	88.89
	AC	Total crimes recorded	40683.00	39217.00
	AC	Total population	496301.00	496301.00
10a(i)	AC	Total crimes per 1000 population	81.97	79.02
	AC	Violent crimes recorded	1786.00	1725.00
10a(ii)	AC	Violent crimes per 1000 population	3.60	3.48
	AC	Burglary dwellings recorded	4252.00	3831.00
	AC	Number of dwellings (households)	198000.00	198000.00
10a(iii)	AC	Burglary dwellings per 1000 dwellings (households)	21.47	19.35
	AC	Number of crimes detected by primary means	7138.00	7053.00
10b(i)p	AC	Total crime: % detected by primary means	17.55	17.98
	AC	Number of crimes detected by other means	2446.00	2720.00
10b(i)o	AC	Total crime: % detected by other means	6.01	6.94
	AC	Number of violent crimes detected by primary means	1445.00	1297.00
10b(ii)p	AC	Violent crimes: % detected by primary means	80.91	75.19
	AC	Number of violent crimes detected by other means	10.00	3.00
10b(ii)o	AC	Violent crime: % detected by other means	0.56	0.17
	AC	Number of burglary dwellings detected by primary means	452.00	457.00
10b(iii)p	AC	Burglary dwelling: % detected by primary means	10.63	11.93
	AC	Number of burglary dwellings detected by other means	448.00	621.00
10b(iii)o	AC	Burglary dwelling: % detected by other means	10.54	16.21
10c	AC	Number of crimes detected by primary means per police officer	7.18	7.20
	ACPO	Victims of violent crime survey, effective sample size	106.00	115.00
	ACPO	Victims of violent crime survey, number satisfied	95.00	99.00
11a	ACPO	% victims of violent crime satisfied with police response	89.62	86.09
	ACPO	Victims of burglary dwelling survey, effective sample size	208.00	201.00
	ACPO	Victims of burglary dwelling survey, number satisfied	192.00	196.00
11b	ACPO	% victims of burglary dwelling satisfied with response	92.31	97.51

REF No.	BODY	DESCRIPTION	1994/95	1995/96
<b>TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT</b>				
	HMIC	Total traffic offences	64616.00	64125.00
	HMIC	Number of traffic offences prosecuted	22597.00	24219.00
	HMIC	Number of traffic offences dealt with by VDRS	4909.00	4830.00
	HMIC	Number of traffic offences dealt with by extended fixed penalty	21795.00	18733.00
	HMIC	Number of traffic offences dealt with by written warnings	15315.00	16343.00
	HMIC	Police officer and traffic warden strength	1016.00	993.00
12a	HMIC	Traffic offences per 100 police officers and traffic wardens	6359.84	6457.70
12b	HMIC	% traffic offences dealt with by extended fixed penalty	33.73	29.21
13a	AC	Number of screening breath tests required	7075.00	8253.00
	AC	Number of breath tests positive or refused	1118.00	1059.00
13b	AC	% of breath tests positive or refused	15.80	12.83
14a	AC	Number of road traffic accidents involving death or personal injury	2273.00	2261.00
	AC	Number of RTA's death/injury under influence of alcohol	85.00	89.00
14b	AC	% of RTA's death/injury in which one driver tested positive for alcohol	3.74	3.94
	ACPO	RTA victims survey, effective sample size	211.00	280.00
		RTA victims survey, number satisfied with service	195.00	257.00
15		% RTA victims satisfied with police service	92.42	91.79
<b>PUBLIC ORDER MANAGEMENT/PUBLIC REASSURANCE</b>				
	HMIC	Number of NHW schemes	1128.00	1479.00
16	HMIC	Number of NHW schemes per 1000 households	5.70	7.47
	ACPO	Foot/car patrol survey, effective sample size	373.00	228.00
	ACPO	Foot/car patrol survey, numbers satisfied with levels of patrol	143.00	106.00
17	ACPO	% satisfied with perceived levels of foot/car patrols	38.34	46.49
	AC	Uniformed operational constables working time spent in public (hours)	5541	9843.25
	AC	Uniformed operational constables working time available (hours)	11368	19911.50
18a	AC	% of uniformed operational constables working time spent outside the police station and in public	48.74	49.43
18b	AC	Method of activity sampling used to provide figures for above.	see Appndx 'C'	see Appndx 'C'
<b>COMMUNITY POLICING MANAGEMENT</b>				
	HMIC	Number of letters of appreciation and external commendations	755.00	677.00
19	HMIC	Letters of appreciation and commendations per 100 police officers	75.96	69.15
	HMIC	Female police officer strength	147	142
20	HMIC	% police officer strength female	14.79	14.50
	HMIC	Ethnic minority police officer strength	20.00	19.00
21	HMIC	Number of ethnic minority police officers per 1000 ethnic population	1.18	1.12
22a	AC	Number of complaint cases recorded	97	140
22b	AC	Number of complaints recorded	117	206
22c	AC	Number of such complaints substantiated	2	8
22d	AC	Number of such complaints resolved informally	38	74
<b>RESOURCES/COSTS</b>				
	HMIC	Total working days lost through police sickness	14841.00	13179.00
	HMIC	Average police strength (includes supernumerary)	1034.08	987.00
23a	HMIC	Number of working days lost through sickness per police officer	14.35	13.35
	HMIC	Total working days lost through civilian sickness	5194.00	4990.00
	HMIC	Average civilian staff including traffic wardens	407.83	436.00
23b	HMIC	Number of working days lost through sickness per civilian	12.74	11.44
24	AC	Number of police officers available for ordinary duty per 1000 population	2.00	1.97
	AC	Net expenditure	£50,169,665.00	£47,657,920.00
25	AC	Net expenditure per head of population	£0.00	£0.00

KEY :- NHW = Neighbourhood Watch  
RTA = Road Traffic Accident  
VDRS = Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS OTHER INFORMATION

REF No.	BODY	DESCRIPTION	YEAR 1994/95	YEAR 1995/96
3a	AC	Local definition of incidents requiring immediate response could include :-  -Where life is in danger. -Where a serious offence is being committed. -Where a suspect who is violent or likely to escape is at the scene. -Where evidence (including witnesses or the identity of an offender) may be lost. -Where a person is at risk because of age, health or for some other reason.		
18b	AC	Method of activity sampling used :-  Psion organisers		
a	AC	ANSWERING THE TELEPHONE		
	AC	Local target time for answering calls from the public excluding 999 calls. (secs)	25.00	25.00
b	AC	How was the performance monitored	Call logger	Call logger
	AC	Number of telephone calls (excluding 999 calls)	1085769.00	1100516.00
	AC	Number of calls answered within the target time	995538.00	1002835.00
c	AC	% calls answered within target	91.69	91.12
a	AC	ANSWERING LETTERS		
		Local target time for answering letters :- We aim to respond to all correspondence within 10 working days with a substantive reply or an estimate of when this may be achieved.		
b	AC	How was the performance monitored :- Each letter from the force has the following footnote printed upon it - "Should you feel that we have not met this standard please contact the Quality of Service helpline at Police Headquarters telephone 01926 - 415000. " Any critical contact from the public is recorded as part of the force's customer contact scheme and investigated. The customer is made aware of the result of those enquiries. The performance against the target was not measured.		
c	AC			
a	AC	ACCESS TO BUILDINGS		
		Number of the authority's buildings open to the public	23	23
b	AC	Number of such buildings in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled persons	1	1
a	AC	EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES		
		Does the police authority have a published policy to provide services fairly to all sections of the community ?	Yes	Yes
b	AC	How does the police authority monitor its performance in implementing this policy :- Appointment of Constabulary Evaluation officer with special responsibility for monitoring this policy.		

## **Appendix C: performance indicators - constabulary and national averages**

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
1. Incidents/100 Police - HMIC1
2. Total 999 Calls - AC2a
3. Local 999 Target Time (Secs) - AC2b
4. 999 Percentage Answered Within Target - AC2c
5. Percentage Incidents in Target - AC3d
6. 999 Calls Percentage Satisfied - ACPO4
7. Station Enquiries Percentage Satisfied - ACPO5
8. PACE Stops/1000 White Population - HMIC6a
9. PACE Stops/1000 Ethnic Population - HMIC6b
10. Percentage Files CPS Fail 1st Submission - HMIC7a
11. Percentage Files Proceeded by CPS - HMIC7b
12. Percentage Files Within Time Limits - HMIC7c
13. Arrested/Reported Persons per 1000 Population - HMIC8a
14. Percentage Arrested/Reported Persons Prosecuted - HMIC8b
15. Percentage Arrested/Reported Persons Cautioned - HMIC8c
16. Percentage Arrested/Reported Persons Other - HMIC8d
17. Percentage Arrested/Reported Persons NFA - HMIC8e
18. Percentage Racial Further Investigation - HMIC9
19. Total Crime/1000 Population - AC10a(i)
20. Violent Crime/1000 Population - AC10a(ii)
21. Burglary/1000 Dwellings - AC10a(iii)
22. All Crime % Primary Detections - AC10bip
23. All Crime % Other Detections - AC10bio
24. Violent Crime % Primary Detections - AC10biip

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
25. Violent Crime % Other Detections - AC10biio
26. Burglary Dwelling % Primary Detections - AC10biip
27. Burglary Dwelling % Other Detections - ACbiio
28. Primary Detected/Police Officer - AC10c
29. Victim Violence % Satisfied - ACPO11a
30. Victims Burglary Dwelling % Satisfied - ACPO11b
31. Traffic Offences/100 Police & TW - HMIC12a
32. Percentage Traffic Extended Fixed Penalty - HMIC12b
33. Number Screening Breath Tests - AC13a
34. Breath Test % Positive/Refused - AC13b
35. RTA Death/Injury - AC14a
36. Percentage RTA Death/Injury Pos Alcohol - AC14b
37. Victims RTA % Satisfied - ACPO15
38. Neighbourhood Watch/1000 Households - HMIC16
39. Percentage Satisfied Foot/Car Patrols - ACPO17
40. Appreciations/Commendations per 100 Police - HMIC18
41. Percentage Police Strength Female - HMIC19
42. Ethnic Officers/1000 Ethnic Population - HMIC20
43. Number of Complaint Cases - AC21a
44. Number of Complaints - AC21b
45. Complaints Substantiated - AC21c
46. Complaints Informally Resolved - AC21d
47. Sickness Per Police Officer - HMIC22a
48. Police Ordinary Duty per 1000 Population - AC23
49. Pay & Allowances Constables /Pop - AC24a

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	R
50. Pay & Allowances Other Ranks/Pop - AC24b	
51. Civilian Pay/Head Pop - AC24c	
52. Police Pension & Superannuation/Pop - AC24d	
53. Other Police Costs/Head Pop - AC24e	
54. Government Grant/Head Pop - AC24f	
55. Net Cost to Police Authority/Pop - AC24g	
KPI1 Violent Crime Detected per 100 Officers	
KPI2 Burglary Dwelling Detection per 1000 Officers	
KPI4 Percentage Public Satisfied Patrols	
Percentage 999 Calls Answered in Target	
Immediate Incident Percentage in Target	

ND =No Data

\* Not all forces have provided the data, therefore the above



## **Appendix D: extracts from appraisal forms**

Source: Career Development and Personal Review Policy Document, 1993. (\* source specifics with-held to preserve anonymity)

# Annual Personal Review

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Forename(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Rank/Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Area/Dept.: \_\_\_\_\_

Appraisal due: \_\_\_\_\_

This review consists of 4 parts:

- Part 1 - Appraisee preparation
- Part 2 - Core competencies (loose leaf)
- Part 3 - Review of objectives
- Part 4 - Personal development plan

## **PART 1    APPRAISEE PREPARATION**

---

The purpose of the Annual Review Interview is to provide both you and your supervisor formally with an opportunity to reflect upon your performance during the past twelve months. In order for the interview to be meaningful and worthwhile to you both it is important that you prepare yourself adequately. It is suggested that you consider the following issues and make notes for your use.

**YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO SHOW OR HAND THEM TO ANYONE;  
THEY ARE FOR YOUR BENEFIT.**

- **What's gone well during the past year?**
- **To what extent have you achieved your objectives?**
- **What has not gone so well during the past year?**
- **If you have not been able to achieve all your objectives,  
what do you think got in the way?**
- **What would you like to achieve in the forthcoming year?  
i.e. do you wish to set new objectives or consolidate in certain areas?**
- **What suggestions do you have to help future development?  
(self or job)**

Your interview will be held at (time): \_\_\_\_\_ on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

with (supervisor): \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2 - Constables

### 1 Communication and Relationship with Others

<b>Evidence/Comments</b>
<b>Grade</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

### 2 Practical Effectiveness

<b>Evidence/Comments</b>
<b>Grade</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

### 3 Problem Solving, Decision Making and Planning

<b>Evidence/Comments</b>
<b>Grade</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

### 4 Knowledge

<b>Evidence/Comments</b>
<b>Grade</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

TANGPERSCONSTB

**5 Investigation**

**Evidence/Comments**

**Grade**

☐

**6 Written Communication**

**Evidence/Comments**

**Grade**

☐

**7 Monitoring Personal Performance**

**Evidence/Comments**

**Grade**

☐

**8 Conduct and Standards**

**Evidence/Comments**

**Grade**

☐

### GRADING SCALE

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percentage of all officers scoring in this grade</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
7 (high)	Top 2%	Outstanding: demonstrates exceptionally strong level of skill at all times.
6	Next 9%	Markedly exceeds the requirements of the post.
5	Next 24%	Sometimes exceeds the requirements of the post.
4	Middle 30%	A sound and well up to acceptable performance - the standard expected to meet the requirements of the post.
3	Next 24%	Generally acceptable but occasional shortcomings in performance.
2	Next 9%	Some areas of weakness - training and development needs identified.
1 (low)	Bottom 2%	Significant training and development needs identified.

## **Appendix E: formal rank structure**

<b>Chief Constable</b>
<b>Deputy Chief Constable</b>
<b>Assistant Chief Constable</b>
<b>Chief Superintendent</b>
<b>Superintendent</b>
<b>Chief Inspector</b>
<b>Inspector</b>
<b>Sergeant</b>
<b>Constable</b>
(1995)

## **Appendix F: interview schedule**

The questions below are typical of the type of questions that were asked during the interviews. Further questions were asked where necessary to explore more fully officers' responses.

1. How long have you been in the service?
2. And how long in this constabulary?
3. Why did you join the police service?
4. Were your expectations met? Have these expectations changed over time?
5. How would you describe the job you do?
6. What is a typical day's work for you?
7. How is your work allocated?
8. How much choice do you have over with whom you work?
9. With whom do you prefer to work?
10. What gives you the most satisfaction in your job?
11. What is the source of your greatest frustration with the job?
12. Do you find your job stressful? If so, how do you cope with stress on the job?
13. Is there much socializing amongst officers?
14. Does socializing happen across or within ranks?
15. How do you find the job impacts on your private life?
16. Is being based here at \*x\* any different from being based in other areas of the county?
17. What sort of contact do you have with more senior officers?
18. Over which issues do you have some control in this force or this policing area?
19. How would you describe the relationship between yourselves and the communities you police?
20. What is your experience of performance indicators in the job you do? Can you give me some examples?
21. What is your experience of training and development in the force?
22. And your experience of the allocation attachment to other units?
23. How do you view the emphasis on Personal Development Profiles for new recruits?
24. Do you notice any differences between probationers nowadays and those who went through the old system of probation?
25. What do you consider to be the intentions behind the new appraisal system?
26. What sort of impact does the appraisal system have on your job / prospects?



27. Following your experience or observation, how effective are the promotion procedures?
28. What do you think of the fast track promotion scheme?
29. How do you explain the fact that women still make up only about 12% of the police force to date?
30. Does working with male / female officers change the way you do your job?
31. So what did you think of the Equal Opportunities training course? Why?
32. What are your views on the much publicized claims of sexual harassment and of racial harassment in the service?
33. Do officers make use of the grievance procedure? Can you give any examples?
34. Would you prefer to work with or without a uniform?

**Appendix G: number of male and female officers by rank**

<b>Constabulary 1995</b>	<b>Male Officers</b>	<b>Female Officers</b>
<b>Chief Constable</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Deputy Chief Constable</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Assistant Chief Constable</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Chief Superintendent</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Superintendent</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Chief Inspector</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Inspector</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sergeant</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Constable</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>146</b>

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